

***‘Modern Islamic Terrorism, Jihad
and the Perceptions of
Melbourne’s Muslim Leaders’***

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Masters of Arts (Applied Criminology)

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STATEMENT OF DECLARATION

I certify that, except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, RMIT University, Higher Degrees Committee and the Human Research Ethics Committee have approved all research procedures reported in this thesis.

Signature of the candidate certifying that the above statements are correct.

Carol Elzain
January, 2008

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INTRODUCTION

1.0 THE EMERGENCE OF JIHAD AND TERRORISM

Terrorism has loomed in the public eye for centuries; however, since 9/11 modern terrorism has attracted a new public dimension. On an international and domestic scope, media and government bodies have identified that the 9/11 terrorist attacks were delivered by the hands of Islamic terrorists, namely Al-Qaeda¹ (U.S. Government, 2002). According to Australian, American and British government official reports and numerous international and domestic media reports, Al-Qaeda publicly claimed responsibility for 9/11 and other terrorist attacks such as the Bali, London and Madrid bombings (Al-Jazeera, 2004: 1-6; Gonzales, 2006:3; National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2002: 1-49;). Furthermore, some domestic and international Muslim communities have responded to 9/11 and other attacks by revealing their support of Al-Qaeda's hatred and violence² towards the West³ (Tarakhil,

¹ A federal jury in the US has identified Zacarias Moussaoui as an Al-Qaeda operative, and sentenced him to life imprisonment for his role in 9/11 (United States Court of Appeal, 2003-2004:3-62).

² In 2007, New TV in Lebanon aired a debate between Islamic scholars on the definition and application of Jihad. During the interview, Sheikh Bakri was asked to comment on his statements in a separate interview, where he described those that carried out the 9/11 attacks as 'magnificent' and that 'Bin Laden had revived the neglected duty of Jihad'. Bakri responded saying:

"The duty of Jihad had been neglected by the Islamic nation for a long time, because of the arrogance and injustice of America and its allies against the Islamic nation, and because of their support of Israel, and what we see now in the region is the best proof of this. The 9/11 operations were a response to great aggressive acts by America - its attacks on Afghanistan, on Iraq, on Sudan, not to mention the historic Crusades from long ago, and so on. They were magnificent, even though they were terrorists. The fact that they carried out a terrorist act does not prevent us from calling them 'magnificent' because this is

2004:1; Ziabi, 2006:5). It was here among these media and government reports that the concept of Jihad emerged as a pivotal religious and political concept that justifies terrorism. As a result, Jihad developed a causal link to terrorism and thus, placed Islam in the forefront of controversy as a religion that creates terrorists.

1.1 THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

Despite such compelling government and media reports on the association made between Jihad and terrorism, questions as to their link remain prevalent. It would be an ignorant and a deeply unjust assumption to make against Islam, if the public are led to believe that an association truly exists between Jihad and terrorism without credibly assessing the construct and application of both concepts. Therefore, it is the aim of this research to analyze Jihad and terrorism first as singular concepts, and then examine the possible link that Jihad may have with Islamic terrorism. In order to successfully conduct such an enquiry,

what religious scholars call ‘commendable terrorism’... we have two kinds of terrorism - commendable terrorism and reprehensible terrorism. Reprehensible terrorism is an attack on women, children, the peaceful, and the innocent” (New TV, 2007).

³ The exact scope of the Western World is somewhat arbitrary in nature. As a result, there is no universal consensus as to which countries are specific to the Eastern world, and which countries are specific to the Western world. Such variations depends on whether cultural, economical, geographical or political criteria are used to prescribe a country as Western or Eastern.

Appendices II and III provide a guideline of the countries that fall within the boundaries of the West and the East. It is acknowledged that although the factual accuracy of the maps in Appendices II and III may be disputed, it is important for the purpose of this research to at the very least tentatively outline a framework of the countries that (may) fall within the East and the West, in order to contextualise their reference throughout this research.

it is important to compare and contrast both the interpretations of Melbourne's Islamic religious leaders to that of academic literature on Jihad and terrorism.

1.2 QUESTIONS THAT THIS RESEARCH SEEKS TO ANSWER

In order to reveal whether there is in fact an association between Jihad and terrorism, it is important to first examine the academic foundations surrounding both concepts. This ensures that the conclusions of this study are not opinionated, but rather, are credible and evidenced. In order for this research to achieve valuable conclusions, it is imperative to assess both the opinions of Muslim leaders in Melbourne, and various academic sources that work towards understanding both Jihad and terrorism.

Through the use of interviews and academic content, this research seeks to assess Jihad's alleged relationship with terrorism by assessing the following enquiries (refer to appendix I for a more specific list of questions):

1. Why has Islam become the most feared religion in the West?
2. Why has Islam, more than any other religion, become most associated with terrorism?
3. Why has Islam become severely misconceived post 9/11?
4. Is Islam an intolerant religion?
5. Is Islam an inherently violent religion?
6. How do Melbourne's Muslim leaders define Jihad?
7. Are Islamic terrorists denounced by some segments of their community?
8. Is there a relationship between Jihad and terrorism?

In order to establish valuable conclusions to these enquiries, this research was sequenced into specific research stages, which are outlined below (see 1.2.1).

1.2.1 Stages of this Research

In order to adequately answer the research questions outlined in section 1.2 above, this research was separated into stages, which are reflected in the chapters of this paper. Chapter 2, which is formally identified as ‘The constructs of Jihad and Terrorism,’ is the first stage in working towards answering the questions of this research. Within this chapter, an analysis of terrorism and the complexities surrounding its highly ambiguous definition and application (on both a domestic and international level) is assessed. Ultimately, this aids in uncovering the obstacles which hinder a universal definition of terrorism, and why some nations have varying interpretations of a violent event being described as terrorism or not.

Following the analysis of terrorism, the exploration of Jihad is then conducted. In this section, multiple facets related to Jihad are explored in order to help understand the foundations of Jihad and frame the conclusions regarding whether or not it maintains a relationship with terrorism. This is achieved through an analysis of the following enquiries:

- The theological underpinnings of Jihad
- The academic definitions of Jihad
- The theological and academic constructs of Holy War and martyrdom as relevant concepts to Jihad

- How and why Islamic terrorists have used Jihad to exonerate their acts of terrorism.

Consequential to the chapter on ‘The constructs of Jihad and Terrorism,’ is the ‘Research Design’ chapter. In this section, a theoretical account of the research techniques are not only justified, but also critiqued in order to establish some possible limitations that this research may encounter. It is essential when conducting research to not only be aware of the strengths of a research study, but also their limitations in order to judge the extent of the reliability of the results.

The most important chapter within this research is ‘Mapping the Links between Jihad and Terrorism’. This section is a comparative discussion of the main findings revealed during the interviewing of the participants of this research, and the literature explored in earlier chapters. Here, the opinions and interpretations of the participants are documented and summarised as raw findings, and according to the most frequent issues that the participants referred to, these determined the themes that this section explores. This chapter sifts through the main participants and academic arguments surrounding each explored theme, in order to frame the conclusions of this study.

Finally, the conclusive chapter, ‘Unveiling Jihad and Terrorism,’ summarizes and presents the results of the questions posed by this research. Although some of the answers to the questions of this study are tentative, the aim of this chapter is to explicitly reveal the findings of this research and offer a contribution to the already existing knowledge of Jihad and terrorism.

THE CONSTRUCTS OF JIHAD AND TERRORISM

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter endeavours to provide a balanced exploration of terrorism and Jihad by reviewing and analysing some of the literature available on them. It will become evident throughout the chapter that the available literature on terrorism and Jihad is nothing short of being complex, contentious, and contradictory. Although an array of definitions from various disciplines such as theology, criminology, and sociology (to mention just some) contribute their perspectives and research on Jihad and terrorism, it does not alleviate the task of defining such terms, let alone establishing whether they have a connection. There are several difficulties associated with successfully fulfilling such a mission. The first is not obtaining literature on Jihad and terrorism, but rather, determining which disciplines complement one another in explaining whether there is in fact a relationship between Jihad and terrorism. The second is laboriously sifting through such complex literature in order to determine credibility and worth. In order to establish some sort of tenable theory on the alleged relationship between Jihad and terrorism, it is essential that a critical examination of some of the available literature on both concepts is critically debated and refined.

Due to the highly complex and disputatious nature of terrorism, it is imperative that the obstacles in defining such a term are explored. The aim of this section of the chapter is not to determine what is or is not terrorism, but rather to address some of the practical and political problems that the law encounters

when attempting to establish a definition of terrorism. Following such analysis, only seven definitions from a multitude of academic and government (and government agencies) definitions of terrorism are introduced and critically examined. To conclude this section, a model definition of terrorism will be nominated, for reference purposes for this research.

Upon concluding the exploration of the various definitions of Jihad, its origins will then be explored. In order to capsule the entirety of Jihad's birth and application, it is essential to inspect the life of the man who founded Islam, Prophet Mohammed.⁴ A brief overview of his life and the major events during his career as a Prophet will be examined in order to establish under what context Jihad emerged as a religious concept. It is widely contended that Jihad is open to interpretation, and as such, attracts no universal definition, but rather attracts a complex debate among experts as to what Jihad permits and disallows. Upon examining Jihad, the concepts of Holy War and martyrdom emanate. Due to the relevance of both martyrdom and Holy War to Jihad, it

⁴ Although there is literature that portrays the Prophet as a peaceful man, in contrast, there are several reports that demonstrate his violent path as a Prophet. The Prophet was born into the Quraish tribe that he later fought against because they were not so willing to accept his teachings. This brought the first significant event of the Prophet, known as the battle at Badr in 624 A.D – it was a turning point in Islamic history (Peters, 1994: 210). The battle at the Badr wells is known as the background against which a major military operation unfolded (Peters, 1994: 213) and influenced many Islamic generations thereafter. The battle ended in a victory for the Prophet and it was here that the spirit of Jihad entered Islam.

The Prophet walked away from the battle at Badr with power in his hands and set out onto a path of aggressive political violence. The Prophet followed up the advantage gained at Badr and entered into the new spirit of Jihad, by leading well over 100 raiding expeditions against Meccans (Walker, 1998: 121). In time, the early raids evolved into larger battles, which eventually began to take on the character of a religious war (Jihad) against infidel or enemy populations (Armstrong, 2000: 37). It was here Jihad entered Islam, and one element of it was Holy War.

becomes necessary to explore whether or not they serve as a direct motivation to Jihad. This debate is critically explored and refined.

2.1 COMPLEXITIES IN DEFINING TERRORISM

It is important before introducing any definition of terrorism that a word of caution be made. Much has been written about terrorism and terrorists. Some of it has focused on the psychological profile of who the terrorist is, what his or her motives are for engaging in terrorism, and how governments should respond to it. However, the first (and possibly the most difficult) analytical task facing scholars on terrorism is to define the term. At first glance, the definition of terrorism appears straightforward - being held hostage for some vague political reason, the assassination of military and diplomatic personnel, or the suicidal car bombing of an embassy, are all considered acts of terrorism. Yet, as soon as one goes beyond these obvious examples, problems arise. The search for a definition that is both concise enough to provide an intelligent analytical premise, yet general enough to obtain agreement by all parties in the debate, is flooded with complexity.

It can be stated with certainty that there has never been, since the topic began to command serious attention, some golden age in which terrorism was easy to define or, for that matter, to comprehend (Cooper, 2004:4). Terrorism is a concept that is capable of change, depending upon the needs of its users, and depending on the time and place in which one interprets its definition. Because of this, (and other complexities facing the definition of terrorism), a lively debate has ensued between academics, self-anointed experts, researchers, and

many politicians, as to what constitutes terrorism.⁵ The lack of consensus on what constitutes terrorism, points to its inescapably political nature, perhaps best encapsulated in the following expressions:

- ‘One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter,’
- ‘Terrorism to some, is heroism to others,’ and,
- ‘Today’s terrorist is tomorrow’s freedom fighter’ (Tuman, 2003:118).

These aphorisms encapsulate the problematic nature of ideological interpretation when defining terrorism. This suggests that there are usually two reactive views to any given act of terrorism.

2.1.1 Ideological Interpretation, Governments, and Their Influence on the Media

The problem of defining terrorism has vexed the international community for years and has thus caused the international legal scholar community to wrestle with this problem for decades. For the majority of this time, and indeed in contemporary discussions, international consensus on what constitutes terrorism has been frustrated by the divergent (and intractable) political positions of some States on questions such as whether the actions of the States themselves can be characterized as ‘terrorist’, and whether the violent actions of national liberation movements merit the label (Levitt, 1986:97).

⁵ Cooper states that;

“...the problem of the definition of terrorism is more than semantic. It really is a cloak for a complexity of problems, psychological, political, legalistic and practical by nature...” (Cooper, 1978:105).

Such disconcerted and divergent arguments surrounding the characterization of terrorism are challenged by the notion of ideological interpretation. Ideological interpretation is the greatest challenge that stands in the way of a singular, universally accepted definition of terrorism. The statement, 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter,' has not only become a cliché, but poses to be one of the most significant obstacles in understanding terrorism today. Whilst some powerful Western nations may regard a specific act as terrorism, illegal and offensive in nature, other nations in the East⁶ may not consider it as terrorism, but perhaps an outlet of expression that originates from a deep sense of injustice and oppression by the powerful (White, 2003:9). Such differences in interpretation complicate the definition of terrorism, and as such, attract complexity, ambiguity, and confusion. For instance, for many groups, the IRA are characterized as terrorists, however, to others they are hailed as brave soldiers in the plight of unifying Ireland (Chomsky, 2005:1).

In furtherance to this point, ideological interpretation is further exacerbated with obstacles surrounding labelling or identification. Depending upon the culture and community from which one comes, a specific group/community may identify a group of individuals as terrorists, whilst another group may perceive these very terrorists as insurgents, activists, separatists, guerrillas, criminals, assassins, freedom fighters, warriors, martyrs and so forth. A significant and recent example readily comes to mind - Eastern (mostly Middle Eastern) governments identify Hezbollah as a political party that is in place to defend Lebanon. However, many Western governments identify Hezbollah as a terrorist network (Bell, 2006:1). Such differences of opinion in identifying

⁶ Refer to footnote 3 above and Appendix II

whether Hezbollah is a political party or a group of terrorists, is for the most part, influenced by religious and political beliefs.

Governments do not confine their opinions within government walls, but rather seek to influence their opinion onto those whom they govern, including the media. According to a report collated by the US Agency for International Development, government opinion has exclusive control over the media, directly or indirectly, and dictates the terms of public debate (Centre for Democracy and Governance Bureau for Global Programs, 1999:9). Thus, if a government from the East identifies a group as warriors or martyrs and the West identify that same group as terrorists, each State's citizens will reflect similar opinion to those that govern them. The cycle of government influence is much like a domino effect where Governments use the media as an instrument to frame public opinion. Chomsky indicates that governments have a dictating relationship with the media and states that:

'The media is a very powerful propaganda system, that is able to mobilize an elite consensus and frame public debate ...more democratic societies like the U.S. use subtle, non-violent means of control, unlike totalitarian systems, where physical force can readily be used to coerce the general population' (Chomsky, 2000:153-157).

One such event where governments played a significant role in dictating public consensus is 9/11. Western and Eastern media coverage of 9/11 attracted vastly differing depictions of the perpetrators. During the aftermath of 9/11, the press and other electronic media coverage in both the East and the West, bombarded their viewers with strong contentious reporting. On the one hand, the Western

media identified the perpetrators as Muslim terrorists, namely Al-Qaeda. They assembled a colossal corpus of reports, dedicated to profiling the perpetrators of 9/11 as violent Islamic extremists who are by Western definition, terrorists. Several scholars detest the manner in which Islam has become the target of Western media reporting. According to many authors like Artz and Pollock (1995) Western media coverage of the Middle East, the Arabs, the Turkish and Islam, are often examined with the help of socio-psychological concepts like 'stereotypes' or 'images' (p123; Hafez, 2000:28; Hashem, 1995: 154). Western media regularly characterizes Muslims as backward and violent fanatics who are often explained by ill-defined concepts, particularly Jihad (Hafez, 2000:28). No event has reflected this more than 9/11.

On the other hand, the East (mainly the Middle East) depicted the perpetrators of 9/11 as either terrorists or martyrs. Either way, these very perpetrators that the West have described as terrorists, were depicted in some reports as having a justified cause for committing such an attack against America. Whether the mass media supported the perpetrators of 9/11 or not, (Middle) Eastern media maintained at the very least, a sympathetic stance. That is, the media showed a tolerant voice as to why these Islamic extremists engaged in such a violent attack. Another example that reflects this point is the Hezbollah war with Israel, which has sparked two definitive sides to the issue. On the one hand, Western viewers are encouraged to perceive Hezbollah as a terrorist organization for it fits within the criteria of Western definitions of terrorist groups. Prime Minister John Howard stated in an interview with the ABC Network that; "Hezbollah has been listed as a terrorist group in Australia for three years and there are no grounds for reconsideration" (Bell, 2006:1). On the other hand, however, the East depicts Hezbollah as a political organization that is accepted by the Lebanese population. Australia's most senior Shia

Muslim cleric, Kamal Mousselmani, has attacked John Howard for backing Israel against Arabs and openly declared his allegiance to the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah by stating:

"Our opinion is that Hezbollah is not a terrorist group. We consider Hezbollah a resistance group. Put those words down, we are not afraid to say that...If John Howard wants George Bush and Israel, that's his problem. We've got nothing to do with him..." (Kerbaj, 2007:1-2).

It becomes imperative therefore, to contextualize the differing perspectives from the East to that of the West, in order to understand how political and religious views, for the most part, influence a society's perceptions. One can begin to construct a framework for answering why some perceive the perpetrators of 9/11 as either martyrs or terrorists. Beginning with Western media coverage of 9/11, the following are only but a minute proportion of the reports that surrounded the Australian media's coverage in profiling the perpetrators of 9/11 as Islamic extremists:

- The Australian: (3rd November, 2005)

(Melbourne, Australia)

'Clerics still preaching hatred of West'

This article condemns those Muslim clerics in both Sydney and Melbourne as supporters of terrorism. In particular, Sheikh Zoud has used his Friday prayer meetings over the past month to praise Muslim fighters and incite parents to encourage their children to become martyrs (Kerbaj, 2005: 1).

- The Herald Sun: (15th October, 2002)
(Melbourne, Australia)
'You deserved it, says Indon fanatic: Terrorist leader cites East Timor, US links'

This article condemns Abu Bakar Bashir's patriots announcing their justifications for the Bali attacks; "Australia's alignment with the US to subdue the Muslim world are provocations for the attack." Furthermore, Bashir's radical supporters also reveal "... if Bashir is detained then we will call upon Muslim youths to prepare to sacrifice their body and soul to defend and protect him" (Masanauskas, 2002:14:1).

- The Age: (19th October, 2002)
(Melbourne, Australia)
'Bombing forces Jakarta's elite to face hard balancing act'

This article warns that Jakarta was bombed because "it is non-Muslim and is a symbol of the white West" (Thompson, 2005:12).

The Eastern Muslim media however, despite many reports that condemn the events of 9/11, shed a contrasting opinion to that of the West. Some reports clearly defend the act of 9/11 and other terrorist attacks as justified self-defence of Islam and its community. Some reports include:

- Eurasia Insight: (30th March, 2004)
(Central Asia)
'Kazakhstani media forum serves as venue for concern over the US security agenda for central Asia'

This article condemns America and quotes that "...today, the United States should be responsible for all things that are happening in the world" (Kusainov, 2004:1).

- Institute for War and Peace Reporting: (10th September, 2004)
(Afghanistan)

'Armed Group turns to politics'

Afghanistan public opinion reveals; "I am very happy about what happened on September 11 because it made the world pay attention to the situation in Afghanistan," and "Bin Laden is a Mujahideen from the country of the Prophet Muhammad. His attacks on the US were Jihad... Bin Laden is a hero and a Mujahideen rather than a terrorist. I pray five times a day that the Americans do not capture the fugitive' (Tarakhil, 2004:1).

- Dar Al Hayat (14th March, 2006)
(Lebanon)

"The legal ideologue of Al Qaeda leader, Mussa al Qarni, recalls the stages of the rise and fall of the Islamic State dream in Afghanistan"

This is an interview with Al Qarni (once personal mufti of Bin Laden), who reveals his opinion of Bin Laden; "Osama is a man who loves death and seeks it. He wants martyrdom. He has longed for Jihad ever since his youth" (Ziabi, 2006:5).

It becomes intrinsically clear that the variations in Eastern and Western media coverage of world events or issues such as 9/11, reflect stark differences. In the West, the perpetrators of 9/11 and those who support them, are condemned as terrorists. In the East however, these same 'terrorists' that the West refer to, are

favoured and referred to as martyrs or Mujahideen. As a result of the perspectives that are expressed within such media depictions, the majority of the citizens to which they report, will ultimately be influenced to assume a similar stance. No study reflects this claim more than the 2004 Pew Global Attitudes Project (under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International). This survey is an international survey involving the US and eight other countries, regarding opinions on several political and religious matters on the war in Iraq (The Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press, 2004:1-18). Interestingly, in one of the questions, participants were asked of their opinions on Bin Laden (see figure 1). The survey revealed Bin Laden as most favourable by large percentages in Pakistan (65%), Jordan (55%) and Morocco (45%) (The Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press, 2004: 1).

Figure 1:
Pew Global Attitudes Survey

Rating Osama Bin Laden		
	Favourable %	Unfavourable %
Britain	3	92
France	4	93
Germany	2	96
Russia	3	87
Turkey	11	75
Pakistan	65	9
Jordon	55	39
Morocco	45	42

(The Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press, 2004:3)

In contrast to the favouring of Bin Laden expressed in the East, the West indicated a dramatic difference in views. The survey revealed that 92% in Britain do not favour Bin Laden, similar to that of France (93%) and Germany (96%). In a similar tone to this study, the 9/11 Commission Report, (prepared and disseminated by the US government), revealed that the event of 9/11 is with no doubt regarded as terrorism (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2002: 315) and Bin Laden is a terrorist.⁷

One can see from the contesting opinions of the East to that of the West that it is within cultural, religious, and even political differences that interpretations of terrorism and who is categorized as being a terrorist, become exhausting and perhaps impossible to unify. Such divergence in the interpretations of who is a terrorist and why, can be neatly illustrated in the 1940s pro-war film, “So Proudly We Hail!”⁸ It depicts the lives of eight US Army nurses stationed in the Pacific during World War II. During the course of the movie, the women are trapped behind enemy lines because of the botched evacuation of a field hospital on the island of Bataan. The women establish that they have one possible avenue of escape, but it is blocked by a small patrol of Japanese soldiers. One of the nurses decides to sacrifice her life for the safety of the

⁷ Bin Laden however, when allegedly asked whether he approved of terrorism and of attacks on civilians, namely 9/11, replied:

“We believe that the worst thieves in the world today and the worst terrorists are the Americans. Nothing can stop them except perhaps retaliation of a similar kind. We do not have to differentiate between military or civilian. As far as we are concerned, they are all targets” (Urban, 2001:3).

⁸ Although this is a case where the US and Japan were formally at war with each other which automatically removes the relevance of terrorism, it is important for the purpose of this argument, to only look to the actions of the nurse and not the political and theoretical circumstances of the scenario.

others. She hides a grenade inside her shirt and approaches the soldiers. When the men gather around her she pulls the pin, killing them and herself. The other women seize the opportunity and flee the area (Scott, 1943).

The Western filmgoers of the 1940s and modern day are encouraged to view the suicide nurse as noble and heroic. It would not cross the mind of Westerners to condemn this nurse as a terrorist. Yet, her actions, in many respects, resemble those of modern suicide bombers. On the one hand, there are Westerners who would perceive this nurse as a warrior who sacrificed her own life for the sake of her friends. The East on the other hand, or more specifically, the Japanese would perhaps, perceive this nurse to be a murderer, suicide bomber or a terrorist.

Is the nurse a hero, or a terrorist? Answers to this question would solely depend on the political, cultural, and religious origins that one comes from. It is here that ideological interpretation complicates how the nurse's actions are perceived, and validates the usage of the cliché, 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.'

2.1.2 *'Presumptive Exclusion' and State Sponsored Terrorism*

Another significant hurdle that intensifies the complexities in defining terrorism is what can be entitled, 'presumptive exclusion'. This theory is pertinent when individuals interpret definitions of terrorism and presumptively profile the terrorist as a politically or religiously extremist civilian or group, and not those in governmental power. The array of definitions on terrorism do not distinctly segregate who can and cannot be accused of terrorism. Due to the lack of precise and explicit characterisation of terrorism definitions,

individuals who view such prescription of terrorism, presume that terrorism is only committed by some extremist group, whilst trustingly excluding governments.

History indicates however, that States have sponsored and administered acts of terrorism. For example:

‘...the Secretary of State (USA) has designated seven governments as State sponsors of terrorism: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria. In the view of the US government, these governments support international terrorism either by engaging in terrorist activity themselves or by providing arms, training, safe havens, diplomatic facilities, financial backing, logistical and/or other support to terrorists...’ (United States Department of States, 2005: 46).

Scholars have expanded this argument and explored why acts of terrorism are so appealing to Governments to implement. One such scholar was Chomsky, who offers an interesting account as to why he believed States so willingly employ tactics that are characteristic of terrorism. He wrote:

"... Terrorism works. It doesn't fail. It works. Violence usually works. That's world history. Secondly, it's a very serious analytic error to say, as is commonly done, that terrorism is the weapon of the weak. Like other means of violence, it's primarily a weapon of the strong, overwhelmingly, in fact. It is held to be a weapon of the

weak because the strong also control the doctrinal systems and their terror doesn't count as terror. Now that's close to universal. I can't think of a historical exception, even the worst mass murderers view the world that way. So take the Nazis. They weren't carrying out terror in occupied Europe. They were protecting the local population from the terrorisms of the partisans. And like other resistance movements, there was terrorism. The Nazis were carrying out counter terror..." (Chomsky, 2002:5).

Logically, State sponsored terrorism⁹ has become a more favourable approach to that of warfare. This is due to the high costs of modern warfare, concern about non-conventional escalation, the danger of defeat, and the unwillingness of a State to appear as the aggressor. Such reasons have turned terrorism into an efficient, convenient, and generally discrete weapon for attaining State interests in the international realm (Katzmen, 1999:86). Various countries use terrorist organizations to promote State interests in the international domain. In some cases, States have established 'puppet' terrorist organizations, whose purpose is to act on behalf of the sponsoring State, to further the interests of

⁹ State sponsored terrorism has been defined as 'governments using terrorist groups as surrogates to fight for their political aims' (Thomas, 2006: 1). State sponsored terrorism can be classified into three main groups:

- (1) "**States supporting terrorism**" - States that support terrorist organizations, providing financial aid, ideological support, military or operational assistance;
- (2) "**States operating terrorism**" - States that initiate, direct and perform terrorist activities through groups outside their own institutions, and;
- (3) "**States perpetrating terrorism**" - States perpetrating terrorist acts abroad through their own official bodies—members of its security forces or its intelligence services, or their direct agents. In other words, states intentionally attacking civilians in other countries in order to achieve political aims without declaring war (Ganor, 2005: 11).

the State, and to represent its positions in domestic or regional fronts (Katzmen, 1999:103). For example, Sudan's support to terrorist organizations has included paramilitary training, indoctrination, money, travel documentation, safe passage, and refuge (United States Department of States, 2005: 52). Moreover, Syria and Iran have become identified as sponsors and supporters of the terrorist group, Hezbollah, by providing them with arms to use against Israel and other potential Western threats (White, 2002:110).

A more recent evaluation of State terrorism was explored by Chomsky in his book, '9-11'. Chomsky offered a contesting account to that of the 9/11 Commission Report, regarding America's 'war on terrorism'¹⁰ in Afghanistan, and accused the US of being a terrorist State. Chomsky stated:

‘...nothing can justify crimes such as those of September 11, but we can think of the United States as an innocent victim only if we adopt the convenient path of ignoring the record of its actions and those of its allies, which are, after all, hardly a secret’ (Chomsky, 2001:43).

In direct relation to the above transcript, Chomsky responded to this statement in a heated CNN interview reported by Zahn, and explained the evidence

¹⁰ In a White House Press release, President Bush defined the ‘war on terrorism’ as;

"...an ideological struggle with an enemy that despises freedom and pursues totalitarian aims....I vowed then that I would use all our power of Shock and Awe to win the war of terror. And so I said we were going to stay on the offense two ways: one, hunt down the enemy and bring them to justice, and take threats seriously; and two, bomb the hell out of them" (US Department of State, 2006:1).

behind his sweeping analysis of the US Government's proposition to engage in a war on terrorism. He argued;

“...America has committed acts of terrorism and America's foreign policy is hypocritical...the United States happens to be the only state in the world that has been condemned by the World Court for international terrorism...it would have been condemned by the Security Council, except that it vetoed the resolution. This referred to the US terrorist war against Nicaragua, the Court ordered the United States to desist and pay reparations. The US responded by immediately escalating the crimes, including first official orders to attack what are called soft targets – undefended civilian targets. This is massive terrorism. It is by no means the worst, and it continues right to the present day...”
(Zahn, 2002:1).

Chomsky's strong accusatory stance against America is well supported by the documented rulings recorded by the International Court of Justice;

“By twelve votes to three, the High Court decides that the United States of America, by training, arming, equipping, financing and supplying the contra forces or otherwise encouraging, supporting and aiding military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua, has acted, against the Republic of Nicaragua, in breach of its obligation under customary international law not to

intervene in the affairs of another state” (International Court of Justice, 1986: 134).

In addition, Dr Chris White, an ex-marine Sergeant of the US Army, stated that;

“Of course, we never call our operations "terrorism" because every operation is considered legitimate to us. When found guilty by the World Court for violence in Nicaragua, we ignored the decision. Too bad the nations we hurt can't just ignore what we do to them. When the planet condemns us for killing between 2,500-4,000 people in Panama, we are too busy planning the next invasion of a country that cannot fight back... If the U.S. government were held to the FBI's official definition of terrorism, their list of victims since WWII alone would include: Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Mexico, Chile, Granada, Colombia, Bolivia, Venezuela, Uruguay, Paraguay, Ecuador, Zaire, Namibia, Lebanon, Egypt, Greece, Cyprus, Bangladesh, Iran, South Africa, the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Iraq, Cambodia, Libya, Israel, Palestine, China, Afghanistan, Sudan, Indonesia, East Timor, Turkey, Angola, and Somalia” (White, 2002:1).

Despite such contentious arguments against America, the 9/11 Commission Report pursued an oppositional perspective to those indicated above, and

depicted America as a victim of terrorism. Specifically, the *9/11 Commission Report* circumvents such accusations by revealing that events such as 9/11, are as a result of Muslims' victimizing themselves and blaming America for their domestic and international troubles. According to the *9/11 Commission Report*, Muslims claim that:

‘America is responsible for all conflicts involving Muslims and that America is to blame when ‘Israelis fight with Palestinians; when Russians fight with Chechens; when Indians fight with Kashmiri Muslims; and when the Philippine Government fight ethnic Muslims in its southern Islands’ (US Government, 2002:51).

Such widespread arguments surrounding America's legitimacy as a peacekeeping country and not a terrorist State, clearly allude to the difficulty in prescribing a power figure as a potential terrorist body.

The US is not the only State to have been historically linked to sponsoring and facilitating terrorism. Throughout the course of history, governments of every era have, in some form or another, executed acts of terrorism without repercussions of terrorist-labelling or formal punishment. There are many examples in history that demonstrate States committing or sponsoring terrorism in accordance with the definitions available on terrorism such as:

- **Libya:** Throughout the 1990s, indications of Libya's involvement in acts of terrorism emerged - German officials uncovered evidence, which demonstrated Libyan responsibility for the 1986 bombing of the La Belle

Disco in West Berlin (Malinarich, 2001:1; World Socialist Website, 1998:1). Ten days later America retaliated by bombing Libya, killing several; among those killed was the daughter of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi (BBC News, n.d; 1). Libya responded in a counter attack in December 1988 by bombing Pan Am Flight 103 resulting in the murder of the flight's 259 passengers and crew as well as 11 residents of Lockerbie, Scotland (Cody, 1988:1).

- **Syria:** According to the US government, Syria provides safe haven and material support for several Palestinian terrorist groups, including HAMAS, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command (PFLP-GC) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Abu Musa Organization (AMO), the Popular Struggle Front (PSF) and most notably, Hezbollah (US Department of State, 2003:1).
- **Mexico:** It is claimed that during the 1970s Mexican security authorities employed torture and assassination against guerrilla members, student protesters and their sympathizers (Wilkinson, 2004:1). The Mexican government relied heavily on its security forces to capture members of the guerrilla group by means of illegal detentions, torture and, increasing disappearances were used as weapons against not only armed combatants, but the family members and suspected subversives of the group as well (Doyle, 2003:2).

- **North Korea:** North Korea had sponsored numerous acts of terror against South Korea since its founding - in the 1980s North Korea was linked to two international terrorist attacks: (1) In the Rangoon bombing of October 1983, North Korean agents attempted to kill South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan at Burma's National Cemetery in Burma. During the course of the attempted assassination, seventeen high-ranking South Korean officials were killed (Hyung-Jin, 2006: 1), and forty-six civilians were injured (Hyung-Jin, 2006:1). President Chun arrived at the cemetery behind schedule and was unharmed; (2) North Korea is also believed to be responsible for the bombing of Korean Air Flight 858 on November 29, 1987 over the Andaman sea in which all 115 passengers and crew were killed (McCullagh, 2006:2-3). That attack is thought to have been devised to scare tourists away from visiting the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul after North Korea was not asked to co-host the events (Koerner, 2003:1).

Many scholars may define the historical events listed above as war crimes, genocide, or mass killing, but very few acknowledge that such events are in fact characteristic of terrorism. In examining the above cases and depending on how terrorism is defined, it becomes evident that States are not exempt from committing the atrocities of terrorism. In determining when a State (or any other group) is the perpetrator of terrorism, it is important to examine intent, motivation, and the legitimacy of the violent act. At face value, identifying such traits appears to be simplistic and straightforward, but each criterion (particularly motivation), is plagued with complexity. Jenkins, who is one of the world's foremost authorities on terrorism, is dubious about pronouncements by both government and media about who is to blame for terrorist incidents and why. Jenkins reveals that '...it is difficult to understand

terrorism unless you know the perpetrators' true motivations, which are rarely accessible or accurate' (Jenkins, 2003:227).

There are two significant reasons as to why it is so difficult to identify violent acts that are either sponsored or perpetrated by States as terrorism. The first reason is that State terrorists (whether State sponsored or State perpetrated) do not seek publicity, whereas individual terrorists thrive on publicity for their cause (Tiefenbrun, 2003:6). The second is the difficulty in obtaining governments' genuine accounts on their motivation and intent in perpetrating a specific act of violence. Realistically, those outside the government are generally not permitted such access. Thus, no conclusive result can be drawn on the motivations of why a State engages in violent acts and thus, only tentative inferences can be drawn as to whether their actions are characteristic of terrorism, or justified by war. For the two main reasons listed, identifying a State as a perpetrator of terrorism is a highly complex and challenging task that requires access to authentic and true government documentation and opinion.

There are other scholars however, that contest suggestions that link States to acts of terrorism. According to international conventions and several scholars like Ganor, 'intentional acts of aggression against civilians by official agencies of a State, either at times of war or in occupied territories, are considered war crimes rather than terrorism' (Ganor, 2005: 11). Perhaps most scholars and experts on terrorism similarly argue that when States intentionally or unintentionally commit acts of violence against non-combatants, it is usually considered as war or effects of war i.e. collateral damage¹¹. However, several

¹¹ Broadly defined, collateral damage is unintentional damage or incidental damage affecting facilities, equipment or personnel occurring as a result of military actions directed against targeted

scholars do not fully acknowledge that particular acts during war are parallel with prescriptive acts of terrorism.

2.1.3 *Warfare, Genocide, and Terrorism*

There is much to be analysed when assessing the similarities and differences between warfare, genocide and terrorism. Thus, it is beyond the scope of this research to offer a comprehensive analysis of these concepts. For the purpose of referring to these concepts throughout this research, it is important to assess at the very least some general discussion of the main arguments that separate warfare, genocide and terrorism.

Many scholars have sought to draw a clear line between warfare¹², genocide¹³ and terrorism, but dare it be stated, the three phenomena are actually closely linked. Each of these phenomena share several commonalities, but the most significant is the use of organized violence to compel others to do what they would not otherwise do (Valentino, 2004:3). Other commonalities include

enemy forces or facilities. Such damage can occur to friendly, neutral, and even enemy forces (United States Air Force Intelligence, 1998:1).

¹² Warfare is defined very broadly by scholars to include a wide range of phenomena such as mass killings and genocide. Often war involves 'deep social changes between groups as a primary cause or precondition of genocide and mass killing; factors such as wars, revolutions and other national crisis provide the spark for mass killing, and; the concentration of political power in certain forms of government is the most important cause of this kind of violence' (Valentino, 2004: 15-16).

¹³ Article II of the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention defines genocide as 'the killing of members of a group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, and; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group' (Public International Law & Policy Group, 2004:2).

grand scale murder of a specific group; destruction of infrastructure; destruction of economic stability; disruption of peace; and most of all, complete disregard for human life in the fight for political, religious or social change. Arguably, the only factor that separates terrorism, genocide and war from each other, are the perpetrators and the victims. If the perpetrators and victims are military personnel, then war is a suitable title. If however, the profile of the perpetrator is a State or military operative, and the victims are innocent civilians, then, depending on the legitimacy of the violent act, war crime, genocide and arguably terrorism, can become suitable titles.

In a research paper collated by the Department of the Australian Parliamentary Library (2001-2002), the distinction between war and terrorism is explored. The paper indicated;

‘A number of factors may help to distinguish war from terrorism. These might include actor (State v non-State), motivation (public v private), scale (global v local), cost (enduring v immediate) or target (functional v symbolic). Few factors are sufficient and a combination may be necessary. For example, large scale or ongoing violence sponsored by a State actor may be viewed as terrorism. However, State sponsored violence that has a functional target and an enduring impact may be distinguishable as an act of war’ (p13).

Such prescriptive measures make it easier for a State to engage in violence than a group that fights for their freedom against suppression by an oppositional group. Arguably, the Department of the Australian Parliamentary

Library has for the most part, justified a government's involvement in violence by translating their actions from terrorism into war. A government may have similar 'motivations' and 'targets' to that of a group who would be identified as terrorists; however, the government is sheltered by politics and power from being labelled as a terrorist. For example, if a group of civilians bombed another group of civilians for a political or religious cause, this is clearly terrorism. Using this same example, imagine a State bombed the civilians of another country in the pursuit of some religious or political cause. The difference between the two groups are the costs of conducting their violence and their profile – (are the elements of cost and profile valid reasons in removing an act from terrorism to that of warfare?) Even if the casualties of such a violent attack resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians, the shift from such violence being recognized as terrorism to warfare, is geared by the power of those who commit such violence. Immediately the government's profile shifts, and the violent act protectively assumes the title of war, rather than terrorism.

2.2 TERRORISM - DEFINITIONS OF TERRORISM

For the reasons listed (and many more that have not been mentioned and explored), defining terrorism is a major problem for researchers and law enforcement agencies. Some experts on terrorism are sceptical as to whether any definition of terrorism has the capacity of being universally accepted. Walter Laquer makes a valid point and suggests:

'Even if there were an objective, value free definition of terrorism, covering all its important aspects and features, it

would be still rejected by some for ideological reasons.’
(Francais, 2003:98).

Most people have a vague idea or impression of what terrorism is. Often, journalists and relevant government authorities have resorted to employing other labels for terrorists such as militia, fundamentalists, insurgents, sectarians and so forth. World leaders even lack precise and prescriptive criteria of the terrorist. Academics, politicians, security experts, and journalists all use a variety of definitions of terrorism (Ganor, 2005: 1). Thus, the search for a definition of terrorism, that captures agreement by all relevant parties in the debate, is highly laborious and perhaps unattainable. Lacquer contends that the ‘only general characteristic generally agreed upon in definitions of terrorism, is that terrorism involves violence and the threat of violence’ (Laquer, 1999: 6).

Schmidt and Youngman, in their book, *Political Terrorism*, cited 109 different definitions of terrorism, which they obtained in a survey of leading academics in the field (Schmidt & Youngman, 1988:5)¹⁴. Australia alone, for example, has an array of definitions of what terrorism means. Despite the overly broad nature of the available definitions on terrorism, it is perhaps worth continuing

¹⁴ Interestingly, during their research they accumulated a list of unresolved issues within terrorism definitions. They are as follows;

1. The boundary between terrorism and other forms of political violence
2. Whether government terrorism and resistance terrorism are part of the same phenomenon
3. Separating “terrorism” from simple criminal acts, from open war between “consenting” groups, and from acts that clearly arise out of mental illness
4. Is terrorism a sub-category of coercion? Violence? Power? Influence?
5. Can terrorism be legitimate? What gains justify its use?
6. The relationship between guerrilla warfare and terrorism
7. The relationship between crime and terrorism (Ganor, 2005: 1).

in exploring some of the definitions that attempt to define what entails a terrorist act.

The first definition to be considered is by the Commonwealth Government, as it is a legislative definition that governs Australia. The Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Northern Territory define a terrorist act (Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)) in s 100.1 of part 5.3 of the code) as:

‘...an action or threat of action that causes serious physical harm or death to a person, or endangers a person's life or involves serious risk to public health or safety, serious damage to property or serious interference with essential electronic systems....It is as an action or threat of action intended to advance a political, ideological or religious cause and to coerce or influence by intimidation an Australian or foreign government or intimidate the public or a section of the public’ (Attorney General’s Department, 2006:131-133).

The second and third employed definitions of terrorism are by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO). It is imperative that these organizations’ definitions of terrorism are included because they are elite government bodies empowered to protect Australia against terrorism and other national security threats. ADF defines terrorism as;

‘The use or threatened use of violence for political ends, or any use or threatened use of violence for the purpose of

putting the public or any section of the public in fear'
(Hancock, 2002: 65).

ASIO defines a terrorist act as:

‘... an act or omission that constitutes an offence under the UN and other international counter-terrorism instruments, or an act committed for a political, religious or ideological purpose designed to intimidate the public with regard to its security and intended to cause serious damage to persons, property or infrastructure’ (Attorney General, 2001:1).

Similarly, it is important to list definitions of terrorism by influential international States such as America. For similar reasons as those listed for ASIO and ADF, American government organizations such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and The US Department of Defence (DOD) are essential when considering definitions of terrorism.

The FBI defines terrorism as:

‘Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives’ (FBI, n.d:1).

The US Department of Defence (DOD) defines terrorism as:

‘The calculated use of unlawful violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological’ (The US Department of Defence, 2006: 1).

Finally, the most crucial account on an internationally recognized definition of terrorism is by the United Nations (UN). The UN is a global association of governments, and for this reason, it has not yet established an official definition of terrorism that is agreed on by UN member States (United Nations, 2006:1). The UN however temporarily defines terrorism as;

‘...actions intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them’ (United Nations, 2006:1).

In furtherance to the temporary UN definition, an international expert on terrorism, Schmid, was solely appointed to construct a ‘UN Academic Consensus Definition’ of terrorism, which states:

‘Terrorism is an anxiety-inspired method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby — in contrast to assassination — the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The

immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion or propaganda is primarily sought' (United Nations, 2006: 1).

Schmid was appointed by the UN to construct the 'UN Academic Consensus Definition' for reasons none other than as the title suggests – it is a model academic definition of terrorism. Thus, for such reasons, it is a definition that is widely used and accepted by social scientists.

2.2.1 Terrorism Definitions and Their Weaknesses

On a positive and very general note, all of the above definitions feature some element of the terrorists' (or persons being termed terrorists) motives, identity and methods. For example, some definitions like those proposed by the UN, ASIO, and the Commonwealth Criminal Code Act, indicate the terrorist's motives as being political, ideological, religious, and philosophical. Other definitions like those of the UN and DOD, prescribe terrorism as a 'calculated and unlawful act'. However, as indicated by some of the points raised by

Schmidt & Youngman (1988)¹⁵, none of the above definitions addresses the following issues;

1. Explicit intent of the terrorist (self-defence, power, and freedom),
2. What methods would constitute terrorism (use of weaponry, public disorder, singular murder or multiple murders),
3. Magnitude of violence – when does it become terrorism?
4. The boundary between terrorism and other forms of political violence such as guerrilla violence
5. Whether government terrorism and resistance terrorism are part of the same phenomenon,
6. Separating terrorism from simple criminal acts, from open war between consenting groups, and from acts that clearly arise out of mental illness,
7. Can terrorism be legitimate? What gains justify its use?
8. The relationship between crime and terrorism

When evaluating the above definitions of terrorism, it becomes intrinsically clear how ambiguous and subjective terrorism is, and as a result, the negative effects of such definitions outnumber the positives. The listed definitions are vague and far too general. They contain several weaknesses that ignite complications when one tries to understand what exactly constitutes terrorism.

The first weakness is revolved around the concept of violence. Almost all the definitions on terrorism allude to a common criterion of terrorism – violence. However, the criterion of violence alone does not produce a useful definition of terrorism because violence itself includes many acts that are not usually

¹⁵ Refer to footnote 14

considered terrorism i.e. war, organized crime, riots, assault, rape. This can be a concern where additional penalties are imposed for terrorism.

When revising definitions of terrorism, it is important to note that at no point do any of the definitions explore the methods of terrorism, other than it is an unlawful violent act. A violent act is, in itself, a broad concept which can be defined as an act of 'intended physical force to cause injury or destruction' (Geddes & Gosset, 1994: 631). Violent criminals such as serial killers or armed robbers for example, commit acts of 'physical force' to cause 'injury or destruction', but would this necessarily profile them as a terrorist? How does one begin to distinguish between a criminal and a terrorist? A relevant example to this point is the case of the Washington D.C sniper John Allen Muhammad. During the month of October 2002, Muhammad randomly killed 10 people (men, women and children) and critically wounded three innocent civilians (Delaney, Carroll, Okwu, 2002). The perpetrator intentionally set out to cause 'physical injury and destruction'. The Supreme Court sentenced Mohammed to death and upon sentencing declared that '...no other State has reviewed a death sentence based on a terrorism law' (Morello, 2005: 1). Furthermore, both prosecutors filed charges against John Allen Mohammad for committing two or more murders in a three-year period and "committing murder as an act of terrorism" (Morello, 2005:1). The question here is not the fact of whether he is a criminal or not (clearly he is), but rather, what type of criminal he is - a murderer or a terrorist?

In furtherance to this point, almost all of these definitions do not recognize the possibility of legitimate use of violence by civilians against an invader in an occupied country, and would thus label all resistance movements as terrorist groups. It is important to note that any use of violence for the achievement of

political ends is common among State and non-State groups. The difficulty is in agreeing on a basis for determining when the use of violence (directed at whom, by whom, for what ends) is legitimate, and when it is not. Such conclusions are likely to be based on political agendas.

The second weakness of terrorism definitions is that they are too broad. Although the broad nature of terrorism definitions allow for generalisability (which, as alluded to earlier, can be a positive point), at the same time, this guarantees varying interpretations of which acts can be described as terrorism. For instance, no specific act such as hijacking and taking hostages is explicitly linked to terrorism acts. Generally, laws do not prescribe specific acts of a crime within any legislation. However, due to the highly complex nature of terrorism, it should be made an exception. It has been argued that more specific definitions of terrorism will help ‘avoid political conflict over basic definitional principles’ and perhaps possess the practical benefit of ‘permitting textual agreement to be reached’ (Levitt, 1986: 102). Moreover, the Canadian Arab Federation relevantly protested against the Canadian laws on terrorism and stated;

‘...the concept of terrorism is ‘open to politicized manipulation, conjecture, and polemical interpretation...the disadvantage of not listing specific acts as ‘terrorist acts’ is that the decision will be left up to policy makers to determine who is and who is not committing terrorist acts. A subjective definition leaves too much room for political bias to affect the decision’ (Tiefenbrun, 2003:9)

The third weakness of terrorism definitions is that they do not address the important issue of intent. Although it was briefly mentioned earlier in this section that definitions of terrorism do, on a very positive note, address a terrorist's motives, they do not however address issues of intent. On face value, although motive and intent appear one and the same, they do have a fundamental difference. Motive is the reason why a person chooses to engage in a particular act (Geddes & Grosset, 1994:394). For the terrorist, that need or desire to act can be attributed to political, ideological, religious, and/or philosophical motives. Intent however, is the conscious objective or purpose, plan and will to act in a particular way (Geddes & Grosset, 1994:321). Generally, a terrorist's intent cannot be fully addressed in terrorism definitions for reasons none other than it would be impossible to identify all possible objectives of terrorists. Although many groups may possess similar motives, they almost never possess identical intentions. For instance, not all terrorists that have political objectives intend to overturn a government, but rather may instead seek to influence change in the government's policies. Furthermore, not all religious terrorists want to convert an entire nation to a particular religion, but rather, remove oppression over a specific group, and influence equality among religions in a country.

Generally, it is commonly contended that terrorism displays a distinctive nature of intent. This distinctive nature lies in the terrorist's specific selection of civilians as direct targets or symbols for their cause. Much of the time, as Juergensmeyer observantly explains;

‘...the victims of terrorism are targeted not because they are threats, but because they are specific symbols, tools, animals or corrupt beings that tie into a specific view of the

world that the terrorist possesses. Their suffering accomplishes the terrorists' goals of instilling fear, getting a message out to an audience, or otherwise accomplishing their political end' (Juergensmeyer, 2000: 127-128).

The fourth weakness in terrorism definitions is that they do not identify the relationship between guerrilla warfare and terrorism. The two share several similarities, and it is due to such similarities that they are often confused. Guerrilla warfare is characterized by the 'involvement of small, highly mobile paramilitary units, who know the terrain well and who use sporadic, surprise attacks; hit and run tactics to harass and demoralise the enemy (usually the State)' (Guevara, 1988:7-12). At face value, it appears that the essence of guerrilla warfare has much in common with terrorism. Both the terrorists and guerrillas oppose a specific government regime; both can be driven by political, ideological, economic and religious motives; both the terrorist and the guerrilla abhor the status quo (doctrine of necessity)¹⁶ and seek to change wealth distribution (White, 2003, 119) and both employ similar violent tactics as a mechanism to influence and implement change in accordance with these motives. Although terrorism and guerrilla warfare share similarities, upon examining other features of the terrorist and the guerrilla, it becomes evident that they share more differences than similarities. Some of these differences are;

¹⁶ The 'doctrine of necessity' is a theory coined by Cooper (1977), who recommends that terrorists in actual fact, abhor violence, to the point of rejecting it completely. However, they cross the line into terrorism when they come to believe that continuance of the status quo is worse than the violence caused by acts of terrorism (pp8-18)

- Terrorists lack the structural capabilities of guerillas, and their tactical operations are limited to terrorism. They cannot wage a guerilla war (White, 2003:131).
- Guerilla violence remains selective; guerillas usually only attack the government and its 'net of safety', unlike terrorists who use indiscriminant violence and place no limits on the selection of there targets.
- Guerillas' purpose is to overturn the government, whilst the terrorists' is to terrorize the government (and the people)
- Guerillas often fight in accordance to the conventions of war (extended combat; limits the warfare to military targets; taking and exchanging prisoners, and respecting the rights of non-combatants), unlike terrorists who have no formal code of conduct. Instead, they indiscriminately attack symbols and noncombatants in the cities (message generators)
- The guerrillas' philosophy is that they represent the will of the people, and must remove the oppressive hold the enemy has on the masses (Gombo, 1990:1), whilst the terrorists represent their own philosophies.
- Guerrillas fight on home land soil, whilst terrorists can globalize their violence

Finally, the above definitions of terrorism have pejorative connotations as explained by Hoffman in his book *Inside Terrorism*, where he wrote:

'On one point, at least, everyone agrees: terrorism is a pejorative term. It is a word with intrinsically negative connotations that is generally applied to one's enemies and opponents, or to those with whom one disagrees and would otherwise prefer to ignore... `What is called terrorism thus

seems to depend on one's point of view. Use of the term implies a moral judgment; and if one party can successfully attach the label terrorist to its opponent, then it has indirectly persuaded others to adopt its moral viewpoint. Hence the decision to call someone or label some organization 'terrorist' becomes almost unavoidably subjective, depending largely on whether one sympathizes with or opposes the person/group/cause concerned. If one identifies with the victim of the violence, for example, then the act is terrorism. If, however, one identifies with the perpetrator, the violent act is regarded in a more sympathetic, if not positive (or, at the worst, an ambivalent) light; and it is not terrorism' (Hoffman, 1998:32).

Other theorists like Hoffman have visited the issue of the pejorative nature of terrorism definitions. Alexandra & Rapoport examine Maurice Tugwell's theory of 'guilt transfer'. These theorists describe guilt transfer as the 'switching of public attention away from the originator of the act towards the act of the adversary' (Alexandra & Rapoport, 1982: 56). For example, relevant parties in a situation often engage in a rhetorical tactic of answering a question or a charge by levelling a counter-charge (Poland, 1986:26). According to author James Wilson and others, the purpose of such a tactic is to avoid the discussion of a specific issue by changing the subject in such a manner that implies the moral inferiority of one's opponent (Wilson, 1979: 89). Guilt transfer is a manipulative manoeuvre within a debate between victim and attacker, whereby the attacker diverts guilt onto their opponent. This results in an argumentative maze between two groups or individuals, where the aim is to skilfully avoid being labelled as a terrorist.

2.2.2 *A Model Definition of Terrorism*

Despite the many flaws and inconsistencies that definitions of terrorism display, it is imperative for the purpose of this investigation, to implement a model definition of terrorism for this paper. The ‘UN Academic Consensus Definition’ of terrorism is perhaps the most befitting definition from those listed, due to the simple fact that the definition is most specific in what constitutes a terrorist attack. It, unlike others in its category, states that a ‘(semi) clandestine individual, group, or State actor/s’ can commit a terrorist act. No other definition makes reference to terrorists’ profile. More importantly, no other definition of terrorism explicitly prescribes State actors as potential perpetrators of terrorism.¹⁷

Furthermore, the ‘UN Academic Consensus Definition’ prescribes particular characteristics of terrorism relative to terrorist victims and reasons for targeting these victims. The definition indicates that ‘human victims are chosen randomly or selectively to serve as message generators’. Moreover, the definition makes reference to the difference between assassination and terrorism, whereby if the ‘direct targets of violence are not the main targets’, it is terrorism, and not assassination (where the direct targets are the targets)¹⁸.

¹⁷ Perhaps this is attributed to the fact that terrorism definitions have been mostly written by agencies directly associated to a government, and are thus, systematically biased to exclude governments from the definition.

¹⁸ In 1985, the French Government was accused of State perpetrated terrorism when they bombed the *Rainbow Warrior Greenpeace* ship during their peaceful protest against nuclear testing (Simons, 2005:1). However, according to the UN Consensus Definition, it is not an act of terrorism, but rather assassination because the ‘direct target of violence was the main target’.

Finally, the UN Academic Consensus Definition alludes to what harm constitutes and advises that harm can be ‘...threat and violence-based communication processes’ in the pursuit of ‘idiosyncratic, criminal or political’ motivation. It further alludes to the notion that a terrorist act is for the purpose of ‘manipulation...demands...and attention’.

2.3 THE RELIGIOUS CONSTRUCT OF JIHAD (A STRUGGLE AGAINST THE WEST)

It is widely contended since 9/11 by the West that half of the world’s most dangerous terrorist groups claim religion as their motivation, and over half of these terrorists are Muslim (Akerman, 2001:32). In the public realm, Islam has become the most conspicuous reason behind why a person of Islamic belief becomes a terrorist and has infused a heated debate that attracts diverse arguments and justifications from both Muslims and non-Muslims. For example, some like Warraq (2002) believe that “to pretend that Islam has nothing to do with September 11 is to wilfully ignore the obvious and to forever misinterpret events” (p70). Others like Sullivan (2002), suggest that “terrorism is not only un-Islamic, but anti-Islamic, and those who commit terrorism should be designated as criminals rather than as holy warriors” (p 79).

Today, Islam is viewed by some communities as a religion that seeks to be at war with other nations and religions that are un-Islamic. A significant speech that supports such a view is by the Libyan leader Al-Qadafi, who declared in a speech aired by Al-Jazeera that;

“...Europe and the US should agree to become Islamic or declare war on Muslims...If Jesus was alive when Muhammad was sent, he would have followed him. All people must be Muslims...” (Al-Jazeera, 2006).

As a result of this and other declarations alike, terrorism has emerged as the instrument to political and religious protest and as such, the concept of Jihad emerges as an Islamic fundamentalist's religious justification for violent actions. Although there are endless contesting and passionate disagreements regarding Islam's stance on terrorism, there are those such as Bouchat who maintain that;

‘Australia's fears and misunderstandings of Islam make it appear as if fundamentalists are united and threatening to gather the Muslim nation in a war against the West’ (Del Carmen, 2003: 102).

The debate surrounding Islam's involvement in motivating a Muslim to engage in terrorist activity can only ever be concluded with tentative results. This is due to the subjectivity of Islam and its laws outlined in the Quran. More specifically, the issue of Jihad's involvement in the motivating act of terrorism is also uncertain. Any inferences that address such issues can only ever remain tentative due to the highly contentious and ambiguous nature of Jihad. For such reasons, it becomes essential to explore the nature of Jihad and explore its construct as a religious concept.

2.3.1 *Jihad: A Peaceful Concept?*

Islamic terrorists and their supporters contend that Islamic terrorism is inspired and justified by Jihad. Such views have been attentively reported in different forms of media worldwide. As a result of these public claims, witnesses of such reports in the West developed an understanding of Jihad as a term of violence, which is synonymous with terrorism. The obstacle here is that Jihad has no universal definition, not even among Muslims themselves. According to Nasr (2003), ‘modern reference of Jihad has caused its authentic meaning to become totally eclipsed, even among Muslims’ (p 96). Like other great, long-established religions, Islam is full of contentious issues, especially about some of its core concepts, such as Jihad. Such confusion invites mixed and contradictory interpretations of Jihad by the moderate and the extremist Muslim and non-Muslim. Therefore, one can only expect confusion as to how Islam frames the use of Jihad. Henderson, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia posed the question;

‘Are people’s fears of Jihad realistic, or are they hyperbole whipped up by people who want us to hate?’ (Henderson, 2006:1).

When revising the endless amounts of reports and academic literature on Jihad, one can only conclude with confusion as to what Jihad fundamentally means. Is Jihad peaceful or does it promote violence and death? The subjective nature of Jihad does not permit a universal agreement on whether Jihad is peaceful or violent. Therefore it is important for the sake of this research to at the very least explore definitions that espouse Jihad to both peace and violence.

Esposito (2002), Professor of International Affairs and Islamic Studies, contends that Jihad means;

‘...to strive or struggle in the way of God, and is sometimes referred to as the sixth pillar of Islam, although it has no official status. Jihad has a wider meaning in Islamic literature. It can be striving to lead a good Muslim life, praying and fasting regularly, being an attentive spouse and parent or working hard to spread the message of Islam (p 26). Jihad is also used in the meaning of struggle for or defence of Islam, the Holy War (Esposito, 2005: 93).

Malaysian Prime Minister Badawi shares his opinion that Jihad denotes peace, and states;

“The Muslim community should address the distortion of the meaning of Jihad, which is often equated with military martyrdom...we need to seriously and sincerely address the issue of jihad and its true application in the modern world...Islamic scholars define jihad in terms of sustained efforts to discipline one's own self in obedience to Allah. Jihad also implies an endeavor to uphold social justice, peace and fair play...It is most unfortunate that some have narrowed down the concept of jihad to physical fighting. It is even more unfortunate that this is the only meaning commonly understood by the general public...” (quoted in Hong, 2005:1).

Dr. Siddiqi, a prominent American theologian and Muslim scholar, offers his account on Jihad, and contends:

“...Jihad does not mean Holy War - it means struggle or striving. Jihad means serious and sincere struggle on the personal as well as on the social level. It is a struggle to do good and to remove injustice, oppression and evil from the society. This struggle should be spiritual as well as social, economic and political...Jihad is to work hard to do right things. ...Jihad is to protect one's faith and one's human rights. Jihad is not a war always although it can take the form of war” (Siddiqi, 2001:1).

Professor Azyumardi, one of Southeast Asia's most prominent Muslim intellectuals, recommends that:

‘...terrorists maintain a militant view of Jihad, and transcribe its definition to mean Holy War against perceived enemies of Islam, rather than the mainstream definition of exerting oneself to the utmost, with war as a last resort’ (Abdallah et al, 2002: 2).

Finally, Armstrong (2000), one of the foremost commentators on religious affairs, offers a more socio-political account of Jihad and states that Jihad is characterised by:

‘...no separation of religion and the State...a Muslim's duty is to create a just, egalitarian society, where poor and

vulnerable people are treated with respect...Jihad is 'struggle' or 'effort' on all fronts: spiritual, political, social, personal, military and economic' (p37).

Here, Armstrong provides a contextualised definition of Jihad that is relative to the times in which the Prophet and the four succeeding caliphs preached that Jihad was about the unity and respect of the Umma. Similarly, Ahmad (2004) quotes Razi, (a classical commentator of the Quran), from his renowned exposition of the Quran:

'The verse, 'Strive against them a great Jihad', some say that this refers to efforts in preaching. Others say that it refers to fighting. Some others say it includes both. The first meaning is the most accurate...' (Ahmad, 2004:13).

In assessing the explanation of Jihad offered by Razi, it becomes clear that Jihad does attract various definitions that are contrary to one another.

2.3.2 *Jihad: A Violent Concept?*

Despite many other opinions that support the idea of peaceful Jihad, there are others that share the opinion that Jihad is a violent concept. For instance, Lewis (1988) explains that the original and classical Islamic use of Jihad in both the Koran and the Hadith, is understood by the overwhelming majority of classical theologians, jurists and traditionalists as armed warfare conducted against unbelievers (p72). Further to this point, the Islamic scholar and intellectual father figure of Islamic extremism, Qutb (1998) argues that:

“...those who claim that Jihad is a peaceful concept and only violent in times of self-defence, diminish the greatness of the Islamic way of life...” (Qutb, 1998:21)

Furthermore, contemporary Egyptian writer, Abd al-Salem Faraj greatly influenced modern Muslim thought on Jihad through the authorship of the book ‘Al-Faridah al-Gha’ibah’ (The Neglected Duty). In a translated version of Faraj’s book, his philosophy centered on the idea that;

‘...Jihad has become a ‘neglected duty’ ... waging war against the political enemies of Islam is justified. The Quran is fundamentally about warfare and Jihad is meant to be taken literally. It isn’t simply about struggle for personal piety, but rather, a physical struggle for Islam against God’s enemies. Muslims are called to be soldiers for Islam and true soldiers of Islam are willing to use any means available in order to achieve their righteous goals. The reward would be paradise itself - in heaven for the martyrs and on earth for the living once a true Islamic state was established over the entire human population’ (Jenson, 1986:202-203)

The significance of Faraj’s interpretation transcribed to mean that the activities of modern Islamic terrorists are grounded in Islamic tradition, adding further to the justifications of the use of violence in the name of religion. Scholars like the Jewish American Pipes (2002), supported Faraj’s claims and recommended that:

‘...the way the (militant) Jihadists understand the term is in keeping with its usage through fourteen centuries of Islamic history – during which it has meant the compulsory effort to forcibly expand Muslim territory and influence. The goal is boldly offensive and its ultimate intent is nothing less than to achieve Muslim dominion over the entire world’ (p 2).

According to Oriental scholar, Reverend Hughes, who served as a missionary at Peshawar in Afghanistan from 1864-1884, Jihad means;

‘...a religious war with those who are unbelievers in the mission of the Prophet...It is an incumbent religious duty, established in the Quran and in the traditions as a divine institution, and enjoined specially for the purpose of advancing Islam and repelling evil from Muslims’ (Hughes, 1885:37).

Ex- parliamentarian in India and current author, Akbar (2002) explains Jihad by celebrating the military triumphs of the Prophet and the victories scored by Saladin¹⁹ during the Crusades. Akbar’s explanation of the religious context of the September 11 terrorist attacks amounts to an encomium honoring Jihad in its most literal and violent manifestation as a vital part of the Islamic faith (Pinault, 2003:1). Several references are made towards alluding to the

¹⁹ Saladin, a Muslim leader of the Arabs, declared Jihad and led the Muslim army against the Second Crusade and won (Akbar, 2002:73).

importance that a Muslim child must be brought up on the accounts of the Prophet's life and the Arab conquests. Akbar (2002) states;

'Islam is essentially a soldier's religion (p10) ... the Muslim who turns his back during a war of Jihad has only one destination, hell. The defining story of Jihad is one that should be as familiar to Jews and Christians as it is to Muslims - It is the story of David and Goliath' (p 19).

Finally, religious historian Ruthven (2007) defines Jihad through the insight of traditionally trained scholars that take a more nuanced view of the duty of Jihad and claim that:

'...In classical jurisprudence, Jihad is a collective duty which is only valid if a sufficient number of people take part in it. War against the unbelievers may not be mounted without summoning them to Islam or submission before the attack...' (Ruthven, 2007:3).

2.3.3 *Islam, Jihad, and its Rewards*

When Mohammed began his Prophetic mission²⁰, he saw himself only as a teacher, passing onto his compatriots what God had told him (Zeno, 1996: 25; Weyer, 2001:44). Then, as the leaders of his own tribe turned against him and his followers, it became clear to Mohammed that Islam would only survive by

²⁰ Refer to appendix IV for a more detailed account on Mohammed and his mission as a Prophet.

means of military victory (Akbar, 2002:16; Al-Mubarakpuri, 1996:201). According to the Quran, God appeared to Mohammed and gave Mohammed permission to call his patriots into military or holy battle, and it was here that Jihad entered Islam, and permission to declare Holy War against an infidel²¹ was given (As-Sanani, 1996: 452; Weyer, 2001:45). In accordance with the Quran, Muslims who engage in Jihad are martyrs, and will be rewarded greatly by God, for the Quran scripture states:

‘Those believers who sit back are not equal to those who perform Jihad in the Path of Allah with their wealth and their selves. Allah has favoured those who perform Jihad with their wealth and their selves by degrees over those who sit back. To both (groups) has Allah promised good, but Allah has favoured the Mujahideen with a great reward, by ranks from Him, and with Forgiveness, over those who sit back. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.”
Quran (4:95-96)

Furthermore, Walker and Khan reveal that it is taught in Islam that ‘Muslims should never cease from fighting in the cause of God and that Jihad, in its most violent forms, is a religious duty incumbent upon all Muslims’ (Khan, 1996:584; Walker, 1998; 325).

²¹ An Infidel is one who ‘*hides* or *denies* the truth; one who has *deviated* from the truth; an infidel or zend-worshiper; one who secretly disbelieves in the mission of Muhammad; an apostate from Islam; a pagan or idolater’ (Hughes, 1895:37).

Mohammed, in his teachings in the Quran, urges Muslims to seek Firdaus – this is the best and brightest part of paradise, just below Allah’s throne, that is reserved for one hundred martyrs (Akbar, 2002: 11; Khan, 1996:582; Hilali & Khan, 1996:911). The Prophet was once asked whether it was true that Muslims who died in Jihad would go to paradise, and pagans to hell. The Prophet replied, ‘Yes – know that paradise is under the shade of swords’ (Quran 4:52-73). Moreover, the Prophet declared that:

‘Fight against those among the People of the Book who do not believe in God and the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His messenger have forbidden, and who do not consider the true religion as their way of life...’ (Quran 9: 29-32).

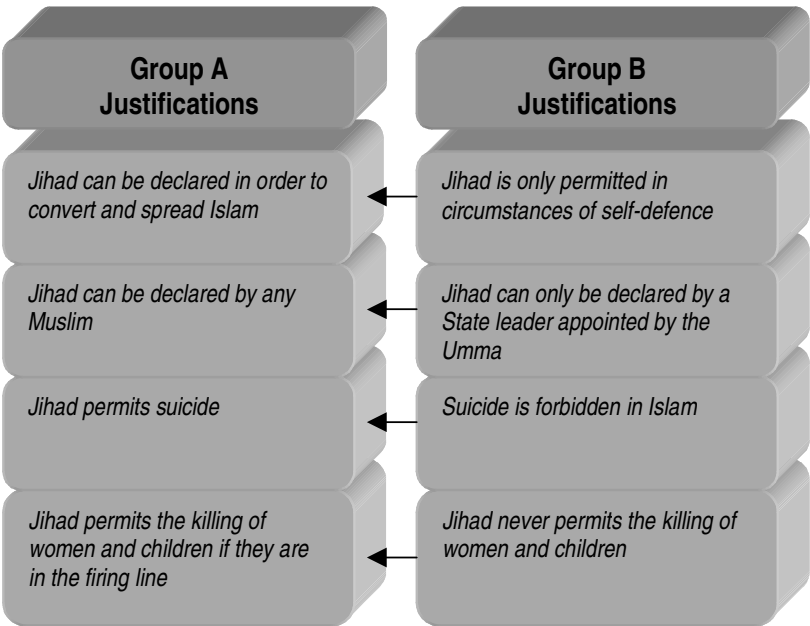
Such divine permission to engage in Jihad, however, was not without stringent conditions and it is within these conditions that debate emerges and tarnishes the definition of Jihad. There are many reasons as to why an individual, group or State of any race or religion engages in violence. In Islam however, Jihad has its constraints.

2.3.4 *Justifications for Waging Jihad*

The conditions for waging Jihad are unclear and contradictory (Figure 2). For some segments of the Muslim communities, it is justifiable for a Muslim to initiate Jihad to convert unbelievers, exterminate other faiths, and ultimately spread Islam (indeed, this poses to be a constant and unending mission to convert the whole world to Islam) (Walker, 1998; 324). For other Muslims

however, Jihad is only ever justified if Islam is threatened or attacked, and self-defence is necessary (Sageman, 2004; 2).

Figure 2:
Oppositional Views on the Justifications of Jihad



There is also dispute within the Muslim community as to who is permitted to declare a Jihad. Many scholarly leaders such as Professor Nagah of Al-Azher University in Egypt, reveal that only a Muslim leader of a State, who has been appointed by the Muslim umma, can ever declare a Jihad (Khan, 1996:605; Nagah, n.d:31; Noor, 1985:390; Ibn Ibrahim., Ya’qub, 1990:349). Under such circumstances Jihad can only be proclaimed by the most authoritative scholar of jurisprudence in the land in question; the inviolability of non combatants is always to be strictly observed and that suicide is prohibited in Islam (Gwynne,

2006: 61-91; Nasr, 2003:121). The obstacle here is electing a State leader that the Umma agree to.²²

Other segments of the Muslim community do not place such stringent conditions, but rather, permit any devout Muslim to declare a Jihad, and support martyrdom/self-martyrdom (suicide attacks) and the killing of women and children in Jihad. For others however, these are grave sins and under no circumstances are these permitted within Islam²³ (As-Sanani, 1996:455., Saeed, 2004:60).

2.3.5 *Jihad – Where to From Here?*

One can only conclude when reading through the colossal corpus of academic literature like those above, that Jihad is a highly contentious concept. Although there is no single doctrine on Jihad that is universally accepted, there are several interpretations, like those explored earlier, that contribute to what is available of its definition (Sageman, 2004:1). It is beyond the scope of this paper to sift through the endless dimensions of Jihad's definition and application; however, it is important to be aware of the divergent explanations offered by some scholars surrounding Jihad's definition. There are opinions like that of Warraq, who argues that '...although there may be moderate Muslims, Islam itself is not moderate' (Warraq, 2002:75).

²² Islam is divided into groups (Shi'a, Shi'ite, Sunni and Alawi) after disagreements regarding leadership of Muslim States and communities (Al-Khattar, 1998:26).

²³ Refer to section 2.4.2 below

Those like Warraq add to the confusion of trying to understand Jihad - such portrayal of Islam insinuates that Jihad supports violence in Muslims' pursuit of some goal. Moreover, it becomes intrinsically clear why the modern West has come to fear Islam and its alleged lethal threat to non-Muslims.

One need only conduct limited research, as explored earlier, to discover the very large number of reports that publish both Jihad's violent connotation, (which ultimately produces an alleged relationship between Jihad and terrorism) and Jihad's peaceful connotation. Thus, it can be concluded that Jihad, as a singular concept, does not have one universal definition or interpretation. The manner in which Jihad is understood by both Muslims and non-Muslims is based around an individual's interpretation. As a result of the open interpretation of Jihad, Muslims themselves have become divided as to Jihad's definition and application. If the Muslim community is divided regarding the religious construct of Jihad, what hope does the West have in establishing, at the very least, a basic understanding of Jihad?

Such lack of clarity in defining Jihad has perhaps driven many scholars to accept that Jihad was intended by the Prophet to have two main connotations – the Greater Jihad and the Lesser Jihad (Ahmad, 2004:15; Lo, 2005:5; Lys, 2006:4; Malik, 1994:2; Perazzo, 2002:1). From the outset, Mohammed had taught his followers that Islam involved a spiritual Jihad (the Greater Jihad) in which they must wage war on the evil inclinations within themselves. However, since the battle at Badr, Mohammed extended freedom to Muslims of that era to use their discretion to wage a physical Jihad (Lesser Jihad) against those who uphold evil in the world (Nasr, 1994:49; Weyer, 2001:44).

Just as the Quran has used Jihad in a very wide sense, so too it is used in the Hadith. For instance, the Hadith as quoted by Ahmad (2004) explains:

‘A group of Muslim soldiers came to the Prophet (from a battle). He said: Welcome, you have come from the lesser Jihad to the greater Jihad. It was said: What is the greater Jihad? He said: The striving of a servant against his low desires’ (p.15).

Here, and within other Hadith, the Prophet speaks of the greater versus the lesser Jihad; however, some authorities are sceptical as to whether such differences were ever revealed by the Prophet, and consider that such Hadith are spurious and forgery (Hassan, 1994: 37). Furthermore, these scholars contend that this distinction has hardly any relevance, and in accordance with the content of Jihad within the Quran, it is unlikely that Muhammad himself ever made such a distinction.

2.4 JIHAD, HOLY WAR AND MARTYRDOM

Holy War, as mentioned earlier, is commonly understood as Jihad. Like Jihad, the study of Holy War attracts a vast array of disciplines such as history, politics, theology and so forth, which all attempt to conceive of one working definition²⁴. Despite extensive analysis among academic literature that Holy

²⁴ Despite the general consensus that war involves some form of militarist combat, war itself may not necessarily involve acts of violence. Although Holy War is defined in its broadest sense as a war declared or fought for a religious or high moral purpose, as to extend or defend a religion, it does not necessarily presume a connection of military activity to religious purposes, though this is often the case. Furthermore, Holy War does not lend itself to a definition that explores types of

War does not always involve violence, its common connotation however, recognizes Holy War in terms of violence.

There are many historical and modern model groups, which publicly declare that Holy War is a necessary religious duty. When sifting through the many Islamic groups such as Hamas, Al-Jihad, and Armed Islamic Group (GIA) that declare and wage Holy War and are recognized by the majority of the West as terrorist groups, one significant group readily comes to mind – Hezbollah (Party of God)²⁵.

warfare or whether a specific engagement is defensive, preemptive, or initiatory, but rather, in its broadest definition, Holy War defines a form of justification for engaging in war by providing religious legitimization (Firestone, 1999:15). Put simply, war does not always mean combat. It may be a state or condition between human groups, even when warfare is not actually being conducted. For example, Soulforce (an interfaith nonviolent resistance movement for gays and lesbians), claimed that the Vatican had declared Holy War against sexual minorities by denying them the same rights afforded to heterosexual Catholics. The executive director of Soulforce appealed:

“...As we begin the new millennium, we will risk misunderstanding and arrest in Rome to help end centuries of spiritual violence against God's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children...for centuries Church teachings against sexual minorities have led to suicide, wasted lives, ruined relationships, broken families, discrimination and physical violence. The Vatican's Holy War against sexual minorities has far reaching effects both inside and outside the church.” (Rutt, 2000:1).

In using this example, it suggests that Holy War does not always revolve itself around physical violence and militaristic measures, but rather through religious deprivation. The Vatican did not implement a violent act of Holy War, but rather denied gay communities Catholic privileges such as marriage, receiving the Eucharist and other Catholic privileges.

²⁵ Hezbollah is an extremist political-religious movement based in Lebanon. It was created and sponsored by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRG's), in order to resist Israeli presence in Southern Lebanon (Barker, 2002: 101). Hezbollah's followers are Shiah Muslims who are strongly anti-Western and dedicated to the creation of an Islamic Republic in Lebanon and the removal of non-Islamic influences in the area (Heymann, 1998: 123). According to Hudson, Hezbollah sees the West as the foremost corrupting influence on the Islamic world – thus the name ‘the great Satan’ (Hudson, 1999: 89). In the same way, the state of Israel is regarded as the source of all evil because of its presence in Southern Lebanon, and in Hezbollah's view, Israel must be eradicated (Barker, 2002: 112).

2.4.1 *Hezbollah: Jihad, Holy War and Martyrdom*

PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, in his famous 1974 speech to the UN stated:

‘The difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist lies in the reason for which each fights. For whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom and liberation of his land...cannot possibly be called a terrorist’ (Neff, 1994:1).

Many like Arafat reject any claim that many violent Islamic groups are terrorists. Rather, these groups should be recognised as freedom fighters in the pursuit of religious, political and social freedom of the group they belong to, and fight for. One of the most recent groups to attract both revolutionary-labelling by those whom they defend, and terrorist-labelling by those they attack, is Hezbollah.

Hezbollah employs suicide bombers to achieve their religious/political goals. These aspiring bombers, who range in age from 12 to 17 years, are trained to maintain strong hatred towards their enemy that can only be satisfied through a religious act that gives them the courage to take revenge (Hoffman, 1998: 198). These aspiring suicide bombers attend classes in which trained Islamic instructors focus on particular verses from the Quran and the Hadith that stress the glory of dying for Allah and achieving martyrdom (Barker, 2002: 118). Students are promised an afterlife, which has gold palaces, sumptuous feasts and obliging women (Gold, 2003: 75).

According to Barker (2002) these young persons, conditioned by years of prayer in mosques, believe that as martyrs, they will go to heaven because, according to the Quran, there are circumstances in which all Muslims are commanded to fight to defend their faith. In such times, Jihad becomes duty, and those who shy from such a duty are condemned by the Quran that states;

‘Fighting is prescribed upon you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth and ye knoweth not’ (Quran, verse 216).

2.4.2 A Brief Account of Islam’s Conditions on Holy War and Martyrdom

Author and member of the African National Congress (ANC), Ahmed Motiar, upholds the belief that although Islam does recognize war as a necessary tool in times when Islam is threatened, he does however place great emphasis on the rules of conduct in any war. Motiar and Lewis both contend that;

‘...Muslims are duty bound to abide to very strict conditions of warfare which have been commanded by Mohammed in various authentic Hadiths such that war should be confined to the battle field; no woman, child, elderly man or any civilian not involved in the battle should be harmed; the environment, fruit bearing trees, water, houses, animals, birds, insects and livestock or essential supplies cannot be harmed or damaged; torture of prisoners

is forbidden; a war must only be waged for the sake of Allah - meaning that the war must not be done for any material gain' (Motiar, 2001:3 & cited in Lewis, 2003:34).

It is clear here that Islam does acknowledge war. However, a pivotal issue arises— war is confined to the battlefield. This suggests that a Muslim can only be acknowledged as a martyr when and only when a Muslim is killed at the hands of their enemy, and not by suicide. Self martyrdom, which is the willingness of a Muslim to administer their own death for Islam by, for example, suicide bombing, is to some Muslims, recognized as martyrdom, but to others, it is against Islamic scripture. For some, Islamic usage of the term self martyrdom is normally interpreted to mean self administered death in a (Lesser) Jihad - its reward is eternal bliss (Lewis, 2003: 33). For others, martyrdom is when a Muslim is prepared to struggle and fight and give up his life for the truth - in this way, and by his struggle and sacrifice for the sake of the truth, he becomes a model, a paradigm, and an example for others, worthy of being copied, and worthy of being followed and remembered as a martyr (Ezzati, 1986:2).

Although there remains contesting perspectives on the conditions of martyrdom, the conditions of suicide are quite clear. More specifically, the Quran institutes many verses that condemn suicide bombing. One such verse is as follows;

‘...Whoever purposely throws himself from a mountain and kills himself, will be in Hell... and whoever drinks poison and kills himself with it, he will be carrying his poison in his hand and drinking it in Hell...and whoever kills himself

with an iron weapon, will be carrying that weapon in his hand and stabbing his abdomen with it in the Hell...’ (Quran, verse 7:670).

Despite such explicit condemnation of suicide in the Quran, there are those Muslims who strongly support it. Suicide bombing for Islam is a well supported act among a proportion of Muslims like British Muslim preacher Abu Hamza. Mr Hamza, who was arrested on charges of distributing and retaining a 10-volume terrorism manual at his home (that was dedicated to Bin Laden), was asked whether suicide bombing was supported by Islam, and declared that;

‘People call it suicide to put people off. It is not called suicide, it is called martyrdom...the role of women is to encourage their husbands to train children as young as 10 so they could become holy warriors... Britain and Western nations are 100 per cent anti-Islam.... Muslims must spread Islam by the sword: European leaders only respect those that are strong. Killing the kafar (infidel) for any reason is ok; killing the kafar for no reason is ok... While children should not be killed directly, their killing is permissible if they are in the target...’ (quoted in Gardham, 2006:1).

Furthermore, in citing the RAND Terrorism Incident Database, Hoffman notes that 81 percent of all suicide attacks since 1968 have been executed by Islamic groups and 31 of the 35 groups that have employed suicide operations are Islamic (Hoffman, 1998:192). This and other research not only insinuates a well established link between Islam and suicide bombing, but also that Islam

may perhaps offer incentives to suicide bombers. For instance, for the suicide bomber, perhaps the recognition and praise of being remembered as a martyr by those they leave behind, and the rewards that are offered to martyrs by Allah, are worthwhile incentives to plunge to one's own death and take a target group with them. In assessing this, the issue here is not whether suicide is condemned by the Quran (clearly it is), but rather, can suicide be recognized as martyrdom in Islam? In a dramatic account, Maha Ghandour, wife of a suicide bomber, shares the story of her last day with her husband before he became what she describes, a martyr. Maha married her husband, Salah, knowing that he was a member of Hezbollah. In 1995, Salah drove a car packed with explosives into an Israeli convoy in Lebanon, killing himself and twelve soldiers, and injured 35 more. Maha shares her story;

“...for two weeks beforehand, I'd felt that his martyrdom was imminent. On the Sunday before, he told me to take care of myself and the children. That was the last time I would see him....For the last time, I begged him to reconsider but he replied angrily saying; 'you have always known that I would be a martyr'. Then he calmed down and continued; 'The children will be well brought up and you will always be well cared for'. He said that he loved us, but that it was his dream to become a martyr... I had to convince myself that to die as a martyr was better than being killed in a car accident...I should feel proud. When we kissed and said goodbye, I couldn't take my eyes off him. I wanted to burn his image into my heart. As he crossed the car park, my son called him from the balcony. He came back and kissed us all again. When he left for the

second time, my son called again, but this time Salah kept walking...” (Taylor, 2002:103-105).

The final words of many suicide attackers like Salah do often reflect a sense of grief and loss over the family they leave behind and concern over the impact of their death on their loved ones; however their desire to meet Allah far exceeds such grief. Juergensmeyer (2000) and Schwartz (2005) both argue that martyrdom operations are acts of religious extremism – the organizations who recruit them to detonate themselves in crowds of civilians have manipulated religious fervour by wedding the ideas of heavenly reward to martyrdom, encouraging their followers to believe they will ascend straight to heaven and enter paradise (Bloom, 2005:1). The contract of martyrdom in Islam is understood differently not only among scholars, but even among Muslims themselves even though Islamic law books are very clear on the subject of suicide. According to scripture, suicide is punishable by eternal damnation in the form of the endless repetition of the act by which the individual killed himself/herself.

Is suicide bombing an act or characteristic of the Lesser Jihad? One must consider, when reviewing such a query, that there is a clear distinction between a Muslim facing certain death at the hands of the enemy in Jihad or Holy War, and dying by one’s own hands. One can only conclude that martyrdom does have a connection with Jihad; however, the legitimacy of such a connection remains tentative.

2.5 RELIGION, VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

Religion is a highly complex and detailed subject matter, and thus requires extensive research if any assumptions are to be suggested about not only its existence, but also whether violence is imbedded in religion. Huntington (1993) argues that because of the ‘clash of civilisations’,²⁶ Islam is becoming increasingly more violent in comparison to other religions (p183). Similarly, Fox (2001) indicates that religion is more important in Middle Eastern ethnic conflicts than elsewhere in the world, and that religion is important in the ethnic conflicts of all Muslim States (p3). Fox further adds to this point and assesses that although this is a valid argument, others however, argue in more general terms and suggest that:

‘...even though religion and violence have a relationship, no religion is more conflict-prone than others because modernization and secularization schools of thought argue that religious conflict will decrease because religion is becoming less important in the modern era’ (Fox, 2004:3).

It is beyond the scope of this research to claim any speciality in exploring the various facets of violence and religion, violence and secularization, and whether some religions are more conflict-prone than others. However, since the interest of this study involves the social importance of how religion

²⁶ ‘Clash of civilisations’ is a theory coined by Huntington, which argues that Islam is more violent prone than other religions because (a) Muslims reject Western culture and prefer to find answers only within the realms of Islam, (b) Islam and the West have historically feared each other and thus, in modern times reject each other’s cultures, and (c) doctrinal issues which divide the world by religions (ie; those that are Muslim against those that are not) (Fox, 2004:3).

becomes a motive for terrorism, a brief overview of the relationship between violence, religion and terrorism will be explored, with no specific reference to Islam.

The extent to which religion plays a role in motivating terrorism remains a puzzle, even among experts (Kidder, 1993:30). The history of religion encapsulates many things, but perhaps one of its most significant is violence. The two have shared such a close relationship throughout history, that to many experts and self-anointed experts, violence can be said to be inherent in religion. All major religions, Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism are tainted with some form of violence. Religion, sometimes used interchangeably with faith or belief system, is comprehensively defined by the Advisory Committee of the Presbyterian Church as;

‘Religion is the way of life of a community of people whose existence is shaped by beliefs and convictions about ultimate reality, particular understandings of the world and of human nature, and a set of practices both devotional and practical. Adherents of all religious traditions express their commitments in word and deed. Religious people orient their living toward a source of ultimate meaning, often understood to be sacred. Most religious communities have a collection of writings or stories that serve as a source of authority for interpreting how to live in their particular way. There are marked similarities and profound differences among the goals and points of orientation of different religions. One important dimension of religious

living shared by all religious believers is the need for those living by a particular tradition to interpret and apply the insights and practices that they have inherited from the traditions to their own time and place' (Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy of the General Assembly, 2004:11).

Upon examining such a precise definition, one can clearly see why religion is perhaps the most convincing and most magnificent concept that occupies human thought and emotion. Throughout history and to the present day, various religions have had their own deeply entrenched belief systems. The fascinating aspect here is that individuals are completely devoted to something that they have had no physical contact with in order to confirm its existence. Despite this, there are several reasons as to why people devote themselves to be a part of a religion.

The most significant reason is that religion offers guidance in an individual's thought processes, attitudes, values, morality and actions (MazGhee, 1992:184). Moreover, it mentors an individual's ethic system, and guides the instilment and internalization of moral discipline. The second most significant reason is the emotional experience. For many, the practice of a religion causes an emotional high that gives pleasure to them. It gives meaning to life and offers emotional and spiritual cushioning to the pressures and burdens that come with earthly survival (Clump, Corrigan, Kloos, 2000:4). Despite the positive effect that religion can pose in one's life, religion can also be used as a potentially dangerous ally. That is, depending on the manner in which an individual interprets the laws and customs of their religion, religion can justify and perhaps encourage violent actions.

Hoffman (1995) believes we are witnessing a resurgence and proliferation of terrorist groups motivated by religion (p.279) and/or injustice like Hezbollah. Laquer (1999) points out that religious terrorism is nothing new, but the appearance of apocalyptic²⁷ groups is dangerous in a technological age (p.47). Why are experts like Hoffman and Laquer so concerned about the relationship between terrorism and religion? Perhaps it is due to the fact that religion and terrorism share a long history. The ubiquity of violent images in religion and the fact that some of the most ancient religious practices involve the sacrificial slaughter of animals have led to speculation about why religion and violence are so intimately bound together (Juergensmeyer, 2001:179-180). Although history evidences many groups which claim religion as their motive to violence, (e.g. the Assassins and the Crusaders), there are also even more scholars who support the idea that it is the extremist which interprets the religion as violent, and not that the religion itself is necessarily violent.

It has been widely argued that people tend to adopt religious belief according to their own nature. On this view, religion may not necessarily be the real driver behind the actions of violent extremists. Instead, according to Harris (1990) human beings, or in this case, extremists, become the drivers of a religion and interpret its laws in such a way that their actions become justified by that religion (p.438). As Russell (1983), a remarkable freethinker of the twentieth century, commented:

²⁷ White (2001) argues that apocalyptic thinking and terrorism have become dangerous allies – apocalyptic thinking invites a terrorist to fight as a holy warrior in a period of fanatic zeal when a deity is about to bring creation to an end. They believe God's reign is almost upon us, and they are facing their last opportunity to purify creation before God's Reign (p941).

‘Men tend to have the beliefs that suit their passions. Cruel men believe in a cruel God and use their belief to exercise cruelty. Only kindly men believe in a kindly God, and they would be kindly in any case’ (p14)

Here, Russell explains that it is not the perpetrator of violence that is exploited, but rather, it is in fact the religion itself. Thus, according to Russell, any form of violence that is claimed to be justified by motives of religion, is in fact a violent act in response to the violent interpretation of the religion. For instance, domestic terrorist Eric Rudolph, who was responsible for bombing abortion clinics and gay night spots in America, cited Biblical passages in a confession statement, that identified religious motives for his militant opposition to abortion and gay night spots (NPR, 2007:2; Mattingly, Schuster, 2005:2). It is important to note that although Rudolf cited Biblical passages in his confession as a means to justify his violence, it is equally as important to realize that the nature of his confession revolved around his ideologies of why he used violence, and not religion. In this case, two academic perspectives on the relationship between terrorism and religion may emerge. From the outset, one perspective may argue that Rudolf included religious verses in his confession statement to not only attract sympathizers, but to also alleviate his conscience from remorse and guilt. In contrast, another perspective may argue that Rudolf sincerely interpreted religious text in a violent manner, or that the religious text that Rudolph refers to is in fact violent. In any case, it is evident that religion is used in some form or another to justify acts of violence, especially terrorism.

Rapoport (1989) indicates that religion provides the only acceptable justification for terrorism (Rapoport & Alexander, 1989: 25). This is not to say that terrorism is justifiable, but rather that terrorism attracts morally supported

motivations that to some, may be valid. This in turn, creates the most well framed argument (compared to other 'self seeking' arguments) for motive to commit terrorism. Kelly and Cook both assert that with religion, no other moral or individual responsibility is required to justify terrorism; by using religion, the morality of terrorism is self-explained (Al-Khatat, 2003: 26).

Religious terrorists view themselves as righteous rather than criminal. Hoffman argues that for some terrorist groups, religion serves as a legitimizing force conveyed by sacred text or imported via clerical authorities claiming to speak for the divine (Hoffman, 1998:59). Thus, religious terrorists are not working for mere mortals, but instead, they are on a mission from God. Religion embodies a sacred ideology – when performing acts in the name of a deity, religious terrorists feel justified and righteous (White, 2003:52). Regardless of how heinous, irrational or inexplicable religious violence is, its perpetrators never consider their violent acts as terrorism, but rather a moral obligation to their God (Juergensmeyer, 1988:181). Stern metaphorically addresses this issue and suggests that 'those who contribute their lives, their money or their support are paying their taxes: those who do not are free riders' (Stern, 2003: 4). Such metaphoric language of taxes translates to 'doing one's part' for the betterment of a religious community. Such advice includes anything from charity work, prayer, adherence to religious laws and most notably, violence for the sake of one's religious community. 'Free riders' are those that refuse to partake in necessary violence for their religion and community - they face the risk of forsaking the reward of heaven, whilst those who partake in necessary violence reap the rewards of heaven.

Terrorists typically believe that they are engaged in a righteous cause; they believe their acts are moral and justified – this relieves them from their (guilty)

conscience. There are two specific techniques in which the religious terrorist is able to avoid the feeling of guilt and justify their actions as righteous. First, they regard their religion as most supreme, and second, they demonize their enemies.

2.5.1 *Religious Supremacy*

It is heavily debated among academics as to whether it is religion itself, or personality that drives some to adopt extremist beliefs. Extremists uphold a belief system that reins their religion as most supreme, such that it may lead to hatred of other communities and the adoption of supremacist beliefs. People with supremacist beliefs typically explain other religions as either in error, or as corruptions or counterfeits of the true faith (Fazel, 1997: 2)²⁸. Religious supremacy can perhaps, encourage violence through means of religious justification. Specific to Islam, the term martyrdom, which is regularly cited in the Quran, is generally accepted to mean a person who dies for his or her religious faith through the course of Jihad (Lewis, 2003:32). There have been

²⁸ The following are scriptures from Islamic, Christian and Buddhist texts that can for some, exemplify supremacy;

- Islamic scripture states; ‘O you who believe, do not take certain Jews and Christians as allies; these are allies of one another. Those among you who ally themselves with these belong with them. Surely Allah does not guide the unjust people’ (Qur'an 5:51),
- Christian scripture states; Jesus said: ‘I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me’ (John 14:6).
- The Buddhist scriptures of the Dhammapada states: ‘The best of paths is the Eightfold Path. The best of truths are the Four Noble Truths. Non-attachment (Viraga or Nirvana) is the best of states. The best of bipeds is the Seeing One. This is the only way; there is none other for the purity of vision. Do follow this path; it is the bewilderment of Mara’ (Dhammapada verse 273 & 274).

many accounts where individuals are prepared to forsake their lives and the lives of others in the pursuit of some religious obligation. For example, Ramzi Bin Al-Shibh, a mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks, professes that;

“...it is imperative to pay the price for heaven, for the commodity of Allah is dear, very dear. It is not acquired through rest, but rather blood and torn off limbs” (quoted in Stern, 2003: 4).

In furtherance to Al-Shibh’s justifications to commit terrorism, Bin Laden himself also revealed his religious justifications for orchestrating 9/11 and stated that “...he who degrades or offends the Prophet Muhammad will be killed” (Al-Jazeera, 2/11/04: 2). Despite the obvious connotation of devotion in these statements, it is frighteningly clear how sincere they are. The extreme essence of these statements is evidenced by their threat to not only forsake their own life, but the lives of others.

The extremist’s views are consistently dualist with the world being sharply divided between the forces of good and evil. As a result of such division, the concept of punishment emerges. Like any hierarchical structure, the task of punishing lies in the power of the Master. Although God is the ultimate power, He is not the only source who punishes people for not conforming to his rules. Most religions teach that those who have been specially called, ordained or anointed can also carry out the punishment on behalf of God (Redekop, 2005: 2). The trouble here is there are too many people who believe they were ordained or called by God to punish people on his behalf. One such example is the assassin of the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who upon questioning was asked why he killed the Prime Minister. He stated:

"I acted alone and on orders from God (Stern, 2003: xv). It was a bid to stop the Mideast peace process and avoid giving Israel to the Arabs" (CNN World News, 1995:1).

2.5.2 *Demonization*

Another method by which religious terrorists are able to justify their actions is by means of demonizing their enemies. The process of demonization is quite simple - it is the characterization of an enemy as evil or subhuman for purposes of justifying and making plausible an attack (Berlet, 1998:6). To demonize or discredit an enemy is an avenue to clear the religious terrorists' conscience. Hatred of an enemy in war is normal, because it often is the violent result of opposition in views. In religious wars however, enemies do not simply represent people with opposing views; they represent the spawn of the devil (White, 2002:54) and the act of killing what is perceived as evil becomes a religious duty. For instance, pre-9/11, Bin Laden revealed in an interview at his mountaintop camp in Afghanistan, why he supports and orchestrates acts of terrorism. He explained;

'The terrorism we practice is of the commendable kind for it is directed at the tyrants and the aggressors and the enemies of Allah, the tyrants, the traitors who commit acts of treason against their own countries and their own faith and their own Prophet and their own nation. Terrorizing those and punishing them are necessary measures to straighten things and to make them right. Tyrants and

oppressors who subject the Arab nation to aggression
ought to be punished' (Miller, 2005-2007:2)

In this statement, it is explicitly clear that Bin Laden's enemy is transcribed as evil. Thus, as Hoffman suggests, the act of killing demons becomes a sacramental act (Hoffman, 1995:273). In religious wars and from the perspective of the religious terrorist, one does not destroy an individual or group, but rather destroys evil.

The demonization of enemies allows those who regard themselves as soldiers for God to kill with no moral impunity—they feel that their acts will give them spiritual rewards (Juergensmeyer, 2004: 7) such as Paradise. Religion serves a moral purpose - to punish what is evil. This relieves the extremist's conscience from any remorse or guilt. The most important element to any religious terrorist is that their violence is sanctioned by their faith. For this reason, the religious terrorist predicts that victory is inevitable - after all, how can one be defeated when God is on their side?

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Today, we live with the fear of Islamic terrorism, yet society has little, if any, understanding of why and how Islamic extremists become terrorists. More specifically, Australian society has limited comprehension as to what Jihad entails and whether or not it does in fact act as a motivating factor towards a Muslim becoming a terrorist. In order to successfully investigate this inquiry, it is important to sequentially outline the methodology of how this question will be answered, what type of research and data collection need to be employed, and whether ethics is something that needs to be considered.

This chapter seeks to outline some of the theoretical research methods that were utilized in this study. First, qualitative research will be explored as the research tool that was used to gear the entire investigation and will be followed by a segment that explores some of the criticisms that are attached to qualitative research. It is important to illuminate such flaws in qualitative research because it reveals potential negative impacts on the findings which may not have otherwise been considered. In furtherance to qualitative research, phenomenological research is also explored in order to justify qualitative research and why it is the most significant research method for this research.

This is followed by the types of qualitative tools that were used to collect information for this research such as content analysis and interviewing. The application of both content analysis and interviewing will be justified and

examined. Moreover, the strengths and weaknesses of both content analysis and interviewing will be examined in order to determine the credibility of using such qualitative tools.

The final segment of this chapter is dedicated to scrutinizing the research methods and how this would, in the end, affect the findings of this research. It is important to consider such limitations in order to understand the true nature of the findings in this research, and measure their credibility.

3.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As with every social research project, a research approach must be employed in order to characterize a study. For instance, how will data be collected and how will it be analyzed? Due to the phenomenological nature of this research, it was appropriate to utilize qualitative research methods for the simple reason that it allows for both interpretive and naturalistic approaches to the study of Jihad and terrorism. This, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), means that:

‘...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials case study, personal experience, introspective, life story interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives’ (Denzin., Lincoln, 1994: 1).

Qualitative research is the most appropriate paradigm for researching Jihad and terrorism for three significant reasons. First, qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena which aids in the understanding of the world in which society lives, and why things are the way they are (Maxwell, 1996: 27). Due to interviewing being a method of data collection for this research, qualitative research aids in the explanation of complex phenomena through accessing participant's interpretations and lived experiences of the phenomena being investigated.

Second, qualitative research depends upon revealing the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals who are selected for a study to produce subjective data (Hagan, 2003: 287). It is these opinions, experiences and feelings that will help shape the debate and map together the primary concepts under investigation, which are:

- Various interpretations of Jihad
- Meanings behind selected verses from the Quran that refer directly to Jihad, and;
- Jihad's alleged motivation to terrorism

Third, qualitative research is most useful to this study because it is concerned with the social aspects of our world and seeks to answer questions about:

- Why religious people behave the way they do,
- How people's opinions and attitudes are formed,
- How and why cultures have developed in the way they have and;
- The diversity between different groups (Andrews, 2003: 89).

Qualitative research proves to be most useful in obtaining some tentative answers to questions which begin with the *why*, *how* and *in what way* Jihad has become so closely linked to a religious terrorists' motivation. Qualitative research is interested in the social explanation of a specific phenomenon, and in this case, qualitative research facilitates access to participants' understandings of Jihad, and whether or not they feel it theologically upholds any association with terrorism.

3.1.1 Phenomenological Research

There are several components of research within qualitative research, and the most relevant constituent to this study is phenomenological research. Phenomenological research begins with the acknowledgement that there is a gap in our understanding of a specific issue, and that clarification through investigation, will be of benefit (Patton, 2002:78). In the aftermath of 9/11, there has become increasing and complex confusion among religious scholars, academics, government officials, the media and even among Muslims themselves, as to when and under what conditions Jihad can be justified during times of violent conflict. In order to enhance a positive step towards the exploration of Jihad and its relation, if any, with terrorism, it is necessary to engage in phenomenological research.

Phenomenological research literally means the study of phenomena and is used to describe a particular type of qualitative research (Maxwell, 1996: 213). It is a way of describing something that exists as part of the world in which humans live. Phenomena may be events, situations, experiences or concepts (Punch,

1998: 152). In this instance of study, the phenomena being studied are terrorism and Jihad.

Phenomenology is used to help gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of everyday experiences, through tapping into how individuals make sense of these experiences. This (with the use of phenomenological research) requires methodologically, carefully and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon; how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it and talk about it with others (Patton, 2002:104).

Like Jihad and terrorism, there are other phenomena that societies are surrounded by and are aware of, but do not fully understand them. Such lack of understanding of these phenomena, perhaps exists because the phenomenon has not been overtly described and explained, or our understanding of the impact it makes may be unclear (Hagan, 2003: 93). Western societies have come to affiliate Muslims with terrorists as a result of several Islamic terrorist groups (particularly in the event of 9/11), claiming that Jihad is a religious concept that justifies their act/s of terrorism. Due to the ambiguity surrounding the definition of Jihad, such a sweeping generalization may be true to some, and contested by others (depending upon the political, cultural and religious background from which one comes from). Nonetheless, it is a statement that demands exploration and analysis in order to;

1. Validate, as well as discard any falsifications insinuated at Jihad's alleged relationship with terrorism;
2. Aid existing research, and;

3. Elaborate on society's understanding of Jihad and whether their sentiments surrounding such a concept are accusatory or valid.

It is important to note that it is not the aim of this research to provide one working definition of Jihad, but rather, raise awareness and increase insight into its use and application. Through phenomenological research, the complications and contradictions surrounding the justifications behind the use of Jihad to commit acts of terrorism will be investigated and analyzed.

3.1.2 *Grounded Theory*

Qualitative methods help identify each participant's understandings of Jihad and terrorism as something to be discovered, rather than assumed through the attempt to be closer to the lived experiences of the participants being studied (Ezzy, 2002:45). For this reason, an inductive approach in this research was utilized, whereby no initial hypothesis was constructed. Instead, information gradually emerged on its own and eventually shaped the conclusions of this research (Bryman, 2004:9).

Grounded theory has become by far the most widely used framework for analyzing qualitative data (Sarantakos, 2005:348). Grounded theory research begins by focusing on an area of study and gathering data from a variety of sources, by way of interviews and field observations. Once gathered, the data are analyzed using coding and theoretical sampling procedures. When this is done, theories are generated, with the help of interpretive procedures, before being finally written up and presented (Haig, 1995:1). This inductive method means that theory is built from data or grounded in the data. Moreover,

conceptualization and operationalisation occur simultaneously with data collection and preliminary data analysis (Neuman, 2000:146-147).

It was necessary for this research to employ grounded theory as a qualitative approach to analyzing the data for several reasons;

- (a) It makes qualitative research flexible and allows for data and theory to interact (Corbin & Strauss, 1998:22).
- (b) The researcher had the freedom to remain open to unexpected findings (no hypothesis)
- (c) The researcher built theory that is faithful to the evidence by using micro-level events as the foundation for more macro-level explanations (Neuman, 1990:24).

3.1.3 *Content Analysis*

As a method of social research, content analysis is a technique for gathering and analysing the content of text (Neuman, 2000:292). Moreover, it is a documentary method that aims at a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the content of texts, pictures, films and other forms of verbal, visual or written communication (Sarantakos, 1998:279). Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. Researchers quantify and analyse the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within such text (Babbie, 2005:354). Several mediums were employed during the course of researching Jihad and terrorism such as domestic, national and international books, journals, essays, interviews,

discussions, media, conferences, Quran and government reports. To conduct content analysis on any such text, the text was coded or broken down into manageable categories or themes (Kumar, 1999:209) and then examined using one of content analysis' basic methods: relational analysis (Colorado State University, 2006:1).

Relational analysis begins with the act of identifying concepts present in a given text or set of texts and seeks to go beyond presence by exploring the relationships between the concepts identified (Colorado State University, 2006:1). For example, it was not only important to locate text that evaluated Jihad and terrorism, but also to reveal the constructs of each concept in order to reveal and analyse the relationship (if there is one) between the two variables. For instance, it was imperative to cross reference verses within the Quran that referred to Jihad, to interview data and various text mediums in order to analyse, discuss and verify particular arguments. Content analysis allowed for comparison and analysis to be made across the many mediums employed in researching Jihad and terrorism

The greatest advantages of content analysis are first its opportunity to conduct studies that occur throughout long periods of time, and second, content analysis saves time and money because there is no requirement for a large research staff (Babbie, 2005:339). It allows for a single researcher rather than multiple researchers (as would be the case if conducting surveys) in any one given study. It is imperative to also acknowledge however, that content analysis can at times also be time consuming because the researcher is required to deeply rummage through multiple texts. This requires reading, interpreting, transcribing and translating. This can often be quite a laborious task for a researcher.

Content analysis provides the researcher the advantage of correcting errors throughout their research. Despite such flexibility in research, it is important to also be aware of the fact that content analysis is also subject to increased error, particularly when relational analysis is used to attain a higher level of interpretation (Colorado State University, 2006:1). For example, whilst interpreting the existing literature on Jihad and terrorism, there were several occasions, where the interpretations gathered within this research were misjudged or perhaps, incorrect. Under such circumstances, further analysis was undertaken in order to amend such miscalculated research.

3.1.4 *Qualitative Research and Its Criticisms*

There are several advantages in utilizing qualitative research as a research method. Briefly and in point form, the strengths of qualitative research are:

- (a) *Subject-centered.* It describes life-worlds from ‘inside out’, from the view of the participants.
- (b) *Informative and detailed.* It offers ‘thick description’ and allows entry to subjective social constructions of people; it presents the information gathered verbally in a detailed and complete form, not in numbers and formulae (Patton, 2002:331).
- (c) *Interpretivist.* It values the reflective assessment of the reconstructed impressions of the world (Sarantakos, 1998:53).
- (d) *Open and subjective.* The researcher enters the study with no preconceived ideas or judgments, and with no strict research design.
- (e) *Communicative.* Qualitative research relies on the discussions held between researcher and participant.

- (f) *Flexible and Inductive*. Information and theory is free flowing with no hypothesis. Theory is generated from results and evidence. (Neuman, 2000: 147).

Despite such positive elements to qualitative research, it is important to also note the criticisms that are attached to it. One common criticism levied at qualitative research is that the results of a study may not be generalisable to a larger population because the sample group is small and the subjects are not chosen randomly (Kumar, 1999: 112). This research is not attempting to produce generalisable results, but rather to assess the complexity and multi meanings that are levied at an often used, but poorly understood concept.

Some other weaknesses that are prevalent within qualitative research are as follows:

- (a) *Representativeness*. Due to the small sample used in this research, the findings of this research do not produce representative results (Bryman, 2004:284).
- (b) *Interpretations*. Qualitative research cannot guarantee accurate interpretation of data, thus affecting the reliability of the findings of this research.
- (c) *Time*. The lack of strict research procedures often lead to time consuming research, which almost always generates some irrelevant material.
- (d) *Subjectivity*. In all qualitative research, the researcher cannot guarantee objectivity when collating and interpreting data (Patton, 2002:50).

3.2 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The success or failure of any research relies heavily upon the quality of participants that are selected. Specific to this research, it was imperative upon selecting the participants for interviewing, that the most insightful to the study were chosen. In order to predict their level of insight, individuals were first required to fulfill pre-selection criteria.

The participants employed for this research were ten Islamic leaders in Melbourne. Such a specific selection of participants is commonly known as *judgment sampling*, where a deliberate choice of a sample group is selected (Punch, 1998:314). It was important to only consider Islamic religious leaders²⁹ for two significant reasons. First, terrorists are simply untraceable and unavailable to be interviewed (they may be detained by government agencies, missing or simply dead), therefore they cannot offer their first hand interpretations of Jihad and how they believe it justifies terrorism. Even if terrorists were obtainable, the danger element of interviewing them is too high. Moreover, religious leaders' opinions would still need to be considered and measured against the opinions of such terrorists because to solely rely on the opinions of terrorists would not only be morally or scholarly non-credible, but also highly unjust for the Muslim community.

Second, Islamic religious leaders are more likely to uphold more scholarly and insightful expertise about Islam and Jihad, than mainstream Muslims.³⁰ Stakeholders were not selected for the purpose of being representative of

²⁹ Refer to section 3.2.1 for the profile of a religious leader according to this study.

³⁰ Mainstream Muslims, according to this study, are those members within the community who have no religious authority or specialist expertise in Islam.

Muslims and Islam, but rather to reveal clerical and scholarly interpretations of Jihad.

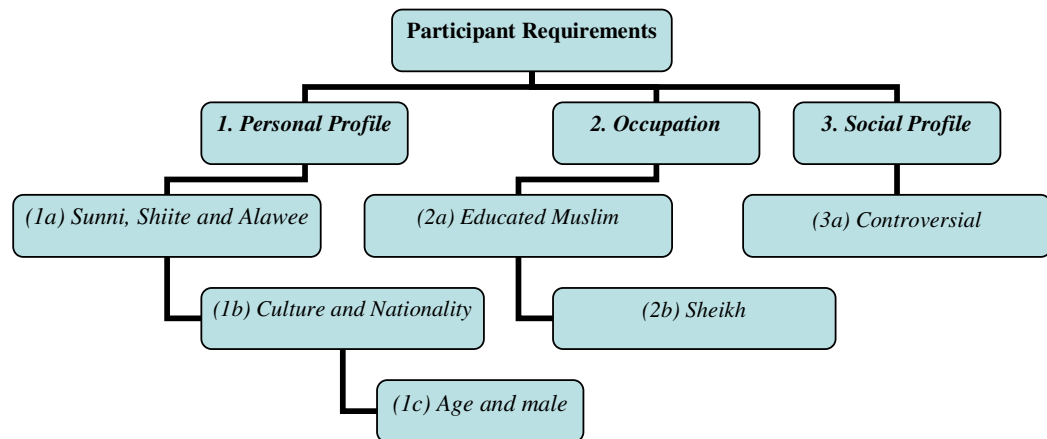
3.2.1 *Participant Profile*

It is imperative for any research to generate pre-selection criteria for participants in order to obtain relevant, accurate and valuable data. Due to the theological nature of this research, it was important to first create a list of characteristics that the individuals had to first meet in order to be considered for an invitation to partake in this study. These were:

- Intelligence (and interest in the research topic)
- Maturity and dependability,
- Sociability and social acceptability,
- Conscientiousness and objectivity

Although the accuracy in judging the presence of these characteristics in participants was limited (no prior encounter with any of the participants had ever taken place in order for preconceived judgments to be made), such judgment was reliant on three specific pre-selection criterions (refer to figure 3 on the following page) of participants: (1) Personal profile, (2) Occupation, and (3) Social profile.

**Figure 3:
Participant Criteria**



Personal profile: Elements (1a), (1b) and (1c) in figure 3, alludes to the three significant features that this research looks for in a participant's personal profile. Element (1a) stresses the importance of involving a diverse range of Muslims (Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims and Alawee Muslims) whilst element (1b) seeks Muslims from various cultural backgrounds (Egyptian, Lebanese, Sudanese, Iraqi, Turkish, Iranian and Indonesian). Diversity in culture and belief strongly determines the manner in which concepts are interpreted. For instance, a Turkish Alawee Muslim may maintain a more moderate understanding of Jihad compared to those who are Lebanese Sunni or Egyptian Shiite Muslim. Thus, it is imperative that this research encapsulate the interpretations of a diverse range of Muslims in order to adequately make any claims against the questions of this research. This resulted in the selection of ten participants that were made up of two Alawees, five Sunnis, and three Shiites from various backgrounds: two participants were Lebanese, two were

Egyptian, one was Sudanese, two were Turkish, one was Indonesian, one was Iraqi, and one was Iranian.

The selection of male participants (1c) was also a significant factor within the personal profile of the participants in this research. Only males were selected to partake in this research for two reasons. First, upon selecting participants, the aim was to elect as many Sheikhs (who are only ever male) as possible. This left a very small sample for Muslim women participants, which in the end, would not have been a representative sample. Second, perceptions of male participants are more suitable to this research than females because their opinions and interpretations are more likely (than females) to be more representative of the wider Muslim community.

In addition to participants being male, their age was also important. Age is indicative of a person's level of maturity in understanding the concepts under investigation. It is important to note that initially, individuals at the age of twenty were predicted to be mature enough to be considered as participants of this research. However during interviewing, a participant that was in his early twenties, demonstrated their inability to respond to questions with depth and expertise. This then necessitated the removal of their data from this research entirely. Thus from this point, it was important to bench-mark the age of participants at thirty years, in order to extract mature and comprehensive answers to some highly complex and contentious questions surrounding Islam. Based on these and other requirements that have been, or will be mentioned ahead, participants of this research ranged from their early forties to late seventies, and all were male.

Occupation: The second criterion in figure 3 was to assess a participant's occupation. Participants were judged on their intellectual understanding of Islam in order to adequately offer their expert opinion to questions posed by this research. The intellectual capacity of participants was determined by their level of education (2a) or their religious leadership as a Sheikh (2b). From the eight Sheikhs that participated in this research, six had no formal education but extensive knowledge of the Quran. Of the two participants who were not Sheikhs, both had formal education.

Social Profile: Finally, criterion three considered an individual's 'social profile'. It was important for this research to involve those Melbourne Muslims who shared their extremist and moderate opinions with the Australian media (post 9/11) on issues such as;

- Islam and 9/11;
- Islam and intolerance,
- Islam and violence and,
- Islam and modernization.

This not only served as a starting point to selecting participants, but also aided in identifying individuals who maintained both moderate and extremist perspectives. In order to accurately identify such Muslim leaders, it was important for the researcher to sift through various media reports that published their opinions and statements.

3.3 FORMULATION OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The interview questions of this research were formulated during the research and construction of the literature review. During the course of conducting the research for the literature review, several issues emerged that required further investigation and inquiry. From these gaps within existing literature, many interview questions were formed.

It is worth noting that during the course of constructing such questions, the task of editing and re-editing the questions proved to be quite laborious and time consuming. Questions were piloted and re-piloted on individuals who were Muslim and non-Muslim and not part of the final interviews. This was necessary in order to ensure that the questions were not only clear, concise and able to adequately extract valuable and relevant information, but that they also addressed the concerns of the Human Research Ethics Committee of RMIT University.

This study was interested in formulating both descriptive and exploratory questions. Descriptive research describes systematically a situation, problem, phenomenon and attitudes towards an issue, whilst exploratory research attempts to clarify why and how there is a relationship between two aspects of a situation or phenomenon (Kumar, 1999:9). These types of questions were useful in attaining the necessary data that this research was seeking to discover. The questions were directed towards explaining specific verses from the Quran that related to Jihad and violence, overt and covert ideological, religious and philosophical values, beliefs, worldviews and practices regarding terrorism, violence, Islam and Jihad.

3.3.1 *Types of Questions*

It is the sole interest of qualitative interviewing to capture the participant's point of view. Each respondent was to be asked a series of semi-structured, open-ended questions (see Appendix I) (Kumar, 1998: 109). There are several reasons as to why semi-structured interviews were most appropriate to this research. First, semi structured interviews allowed the researcher to not only cover the list of questions that were pre-planned, but also allowed the researcher to pick on up on things said by the participant, which prompted further questions in response to points that seemed worthy of being followed up (Bryman, 2004:321). Second, semi-structured interviews allowed for questions or issues to be explored and ensured that the basic lines of enquiry were pursued with each participant (Patton, 2002: 343). Third, the open-ended nature of the questions helped elicit expansive responses from respondents that ultimately alluded to a variety of ideas and feelings that they had about the questions asked (Wisker, 2001:141). Fourth, open-ended questions allowed time for participants to examine each question and talk for longer (than would otherwise be the case with closed-ended questions), and ultimately reveal their feelings and views more fully. Fifth, semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility with restrictions at a minimum, thus allowing respondents to think and talk freely at their own pace. This ultimately produced more intense responses than if interviews were highly structured and restrictive (Sarantakos, 2005:268).

3.3.2 *Attracting Participants*

During the course of locating individuals for individual interviewing, several obstacles were encountered. First, Muslim men were reluctant to converse with

a woman. As a result of this, there were many occasions where Islamic men did not reciprocate any form of discussion, and ultimately, no participation eventuated from what little conversation was initiated. This severely limited the number of participants that were willing to participate in the study.

The second and most challenging reason as to why many individuals were not willing to participate in this study, was due to the fact that one month prior to the commencement of the researcher locating participants, one representative from the Melbourne Muslim community had been elected to speak on behalf of the Melbourne Muslim community. Many individuals advised that their elected community representative was the only person permitted to speak to the media, and provide any information or advice to those outside their community. The most significant reason offered by individuals in the Muslim community as to why a representative had been elected, was due to the fact that the community feared that their words would be manipulated and thus misrepresented. This ultimately led to the third reason as to why individuals were reluctant to participate in this research.

The third reason for reluctance to participate in the study was because individuals were afraid that this research would negatively manipulate their opinions and responses to suit Western agendas. Prior media interviews, according to the many individuals that were approached, had manipulated the words of those Muslims who had been interviewed to represent Islam in such a way, that Australians came to fear Muslims.

To overcome such challenging obstacles, it was essential to win the trust of the participants and convince them that this study has no agenda. This was achieved by ensuring them, (in Arabic most of the time), that this research was

not interested in manipulating their responses, for it would invalidate the academic aim of this research, which is to reveal the most genuine interpretations of Jihad by Muslims, and reveal whether in fact it has any relationship with terrorism.

It was also important to converse in Arabic with those who were fluent in the language in order to at the very least begin to build a researcher-participant relationship (eight out of ten could speak Arabic). Thankfully, conversing in Arabic proved to be most useful. It not only softened the ‘paranoia’ of some individuals, but it facilitated conversation, and thus the opportunity to attract their interest and win their trust to participate in the study. Unlike other related research, similar to that by Al-Khattar (1998) where he did not conduct his interviews in Arabic, conversation in Arabic encouraged valuable revelations by the participants during interviewing.³¹

It is important to note the importance of being able to speak fluent Arabic with the participants of this and other related studies. If interviews were conducted in English, this would have more than likely negatively impacted on the quality of the data collected. For instance, this could have limited the responses of participants as a result of language barriers, but more importantly, this could have resulted in less contentious data, and more limited discussion than would have otherwise taken place if spoken in Arabic.

³¹ Some of the very participants that were interviewed in this study were, not as a result of this research, later approached by media for interviews. These participants refused to comment and respond to some of the same questions that this research posed, thus leaving the media with little to report on regarding several issues. Some of these questions revolved around Hezbollah, Bin Laden, the event of 9/11 and the Muslim community’s perceptions of Australia post 9/11. Interestingly, although the media had no success in extracting responses to such questions, the participants not only willingly offered their response to such questions in this research, but their answers provided ‘thick description’ - thus rewarding this research as a unique and rich study.

Previous studies on Jihad faced obstacles when the researcher could not speak Arabic. Not only did it limit the number of participants for similar reasons to those listed above, but it also required a translator to intervene to interpret the results gathered. This raises ethical concerns as to the accuracy of the results gathered. Weber warned;

‘It is quite evident that anyone who is forced to rely on translations...has to rely himself on a specialist literature which is often highly controversial, and the merits of which he is unable to judge accurately. Such a writer must make modest claims for the value of his work’ (quoted in Williams, 1994:8).

In this respect, the conclusions accumulated by a non-Arabic researcher, could not only limit the number of willing stakeholders to participate in relevant studies such as this, but the reported results could perhaps be suspect for reasons indicated below;

- Unstable relationship between researcher and participant. Perhaps the participant may be hesitant to reveal their ‘true’ emotions and interpretations to the researcher whom they cannot relate to, and as a result may not trust.
- Obstacles of accuracy in interpretation from translator to researcher.

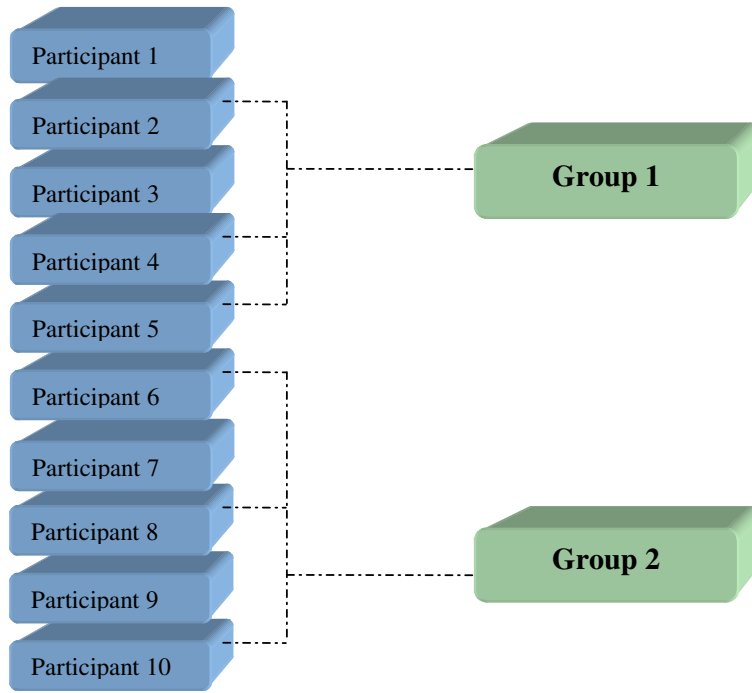
Finally, locating individuals to partake in this research proved to be a major hindrance. Initially, potential participants were located in the World Wide Web, media releases and various organizations such as schools, universities

and mosques - formal invitations were sent to all potential candidates. However, individuals did not respond to any of the invitation letters and many did not return the follow-up phone calls or emails. Therefore, on the occasion that conversations occurred, or interviews were conducted, each person or participant was asked whether or not they knew someone who would be beneficial to this study. This technique is commonly referred to as snowball sampling which is the process of selecting a sample, and then asking this sample to identify other people in the community to partake in the research (Kumar, 1999:162). Put simply, it is networking. This proved to be the most effective means by which to locate participants.

3.3.3 *Interviewing Process and Obstacles*

Originally, it was anticipated that two types of interviews would be employed for this research; *individual interviewing* and *group interviewing* (see figure 4 on the following page). *Individual interviews* were to be the first type of administered interview, followed by two *group interviews* (three participants in each group) at a later stage. It was anticipated that only a small sample of ten *individual interviews* were to be conducted, one-on-one with an interviewee, and then six of these ten participants would be selected and invited to participate in a *group interview* at a later date. These six participants were selected based on their level of involvement and demonstration of expertise during individual interviews. However, during the administering of individual interviews, for reasons none other than participants not having the time to participate in *group interviews*, group interviews were eliminated entirely from the interview process.

Figure 4:
Initial Interview Process



There is the assumption that *individual interviews* alone may not produce data that is exhaustive enough to draw conclusions from; however the data accumulated during *individual interviews*, proved to be capacious and indicated exhaustive data - enough to draw an abundance of comprehensive conclusions from. As a result, the ten participants in the *individual interviews* became a sufficient number of participants to produce insightful results for this research.

3.3.4 *Strengths of Interviewing*

The most useful qualitative measure in this research, was interviewing. Interviews enabled face-to-face discussion with human subjects and helped access their thoughts, perceptions and emotions (Wisker, 2001:140). It was these individual judgments, emotions and interpretations (alongside already existing literature), that ultimately helped gear a diverse understanding of Jihad, and whether or not Islamic extremists are using the concept correctly, or are abusing its use in order to justify their terrorist acts.

There are several reasons why interviewing was of benefit to this study. First, interviewing is perhaps the most useful way of accessing peoples' perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality (Punch, 1998: 345). The judgments of Islamic religious leaders helped reveal two pivotal questions;

- How extremists are using Jihad to justify their terrorist acts and,
- Whether or not this is religiously justified.

Second, interviewing offered the researcher the opportunity to obtain both emotion and information from those being interviewed (Neuman, 1991: 189). This empowers the data collected as being 'close to the truth'. And third, interviewing allowed active involvement of respondents in the construction of data about their lives, which perhaps, made the study more reliable and fairer than if they were not interviewed.

Some other general strengths of interviewing that are usually generic in most interviews include;

- Flexibility: The interviews were adjusted to meet many diverse situations such as re-scheduling and breaks during interviewing (often interviews spanned one and a half or more hours)
- Response rate: Every participant offered a high response rate to the questions posed during interviewing – perhaps this was due to altruism, passion and frustration
- Confirmation. If in the instance that the researcher was unclear about a participant's response, the researcher had the opportunity to clarify such ambiguity with the participant
- Thoroughness: The researcher could guarantee that all questions were answered and the interview was completed
- Control: The researcher had full control over where interviews were conducted. Due to the highly complex nature of this research, it was imperative that interviews were conducted in an environment where participants felt most comfortable. This facilitated 'free flowing' thoughts, trust and comfort.

3.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

In every social research project, limitations and errors are unavoidable, and this research is no exception. There are several limitations within this study. The first, and perhaps the most significant limitation, is regarding the representativeness of the sample size of Islamic religious leaders used for this research. Representativeness is a sample of the population from which if the

aggregate characteristics of the sample closely approximate those same aggregate characteristics in the population (Babbie, 2005:195). Like many other studies that are relevant to this research topic, the most problematic venture of this research, was that it was difficult to attract participants, let alone a diverse sample of Melbourne's Islamic leaders. Such an attempt would have required;

- (a) A master list of Melbourne's Islamic leaders.
- (b) A vast amount of trust and interest by many participants, neither of which were easy to attract.

The second limitation was related to the prescribed conditions of this research set by RMIT University. There are many areas within this research that could not be thoroughly explored due to word length constraints.³² RMIT regulation permits a maximum of 55,000 words for a Masters thesis (RMIT University, n.d:35). In order to thoroughly assess areas such as religion, warfare, genocide and martyrdom, a greater word length would have been required, which is beyond the permitted scope of this study. Such restriction, negatively impacted the investigation of these areas, such that it may in the end, result in 'pockets' or 'holes' in the conclusions of this research.

The third limitation involves the interviewing process. Interviewing of any kind does possess some obvious problems and can be effected by many and diverse problems and errors (Sarantakos, 2005:286). First, interviews can be very time consuming and exhausting. Open-ended interviews in particular are time

³² Areas within this research which lacked comprehensive investigation are warfare, genocide and terrorism (chapter 2, section 2.1.3); religion and violence (chapter 2, section 2.5), and media and terrorism.

consuming, because they attract significant interpretative variations from the participants (Silverman, 1985:126). It is, however, the most crucial technique in obtaining the opinions, interpretations and emotions of participants in order to establish a conclusive result.

A further disadvantage of interviewing is what is known as *interviewer effect* or *bias*. *Interviewer bias* may be responsible for distorted results which ultimately produce unreliable data (Hagan, 2003: 175). This research was conducted by a Lebanese Catholic female. Gender, nationality and religion could be factors that threaten the reliability of the findings in such ways, that perhaps the researcher unknowingly selected the most extreme statements made by the participants in the interviews for data analysis for the following reasons;

- As a result of being female, rejection by many members of the Muslim community may have caused the researcher to perceive individuals from the Muslim community as offensive.
- Being Lebanese posed to be a great advantage to this research, however being Catholic attracted suspicion and at times unfriendliness from the participants. Such treatment by only a few members of the Muslim community may have initially influenced the researcher to perceive Muslims as being somewhat intolerant of other faiths.

The above reasons may also be regarded as ethical concerns - results could have been mishandled, and therefore not entirely representative of the opinions gathered during interviewing. It is important to note that at no point as a result of such treatment by some members of the Muslim community, did the researcher consciously seek to manipulate or sabotage the data collected during

interviewing. Instead, the purpose of mentioning such obstacles is to allude to some possible limitations, which may not have in the end necessarily affected the results.

Another ethical concern of this research could perhaps be misinterpretation of data collected during interviewing. In all qualitative interviews, every researcher runs the risk of making mistakes in recording the responses of the participants whilst interviewing, as a result of distraction or mere misunderstandings. To overcome these hurdles, during interviews, audio equipment was used because;

- It allowed the interviewer the opportunity to give the respondent their full and undivided attention, which leads to more intensive and revealing conversation;
- It captured the entirety of what was discussed during the interview without the interviewer moulding their distortions on what the respondent had stated;
- The interviewer was able to re-cap at a later date what was said during interviews.

In addition, if upon interpreting the results, the respondent's opinions were unclear or ambiguous, the interviewer was able to either clarify during interviewing or contact the relevant participant at a later date and request further explanation - participants cannot dispute what they have said because it is captured on tape that was professionally transcribed.

Although audio equipment is most useful in capturing the accuracy of interview data, it was anticipated that participants may object to its use because they may have felt wary that their voice was being recorded. Despite reassurance in the Plain Language Statement that their identity would never be revealed, their uneasiness could have in the end, changed and ultimately jeopardized the content of their answers which would have been disastrous for this study. To overcome this, each participant was advised that the tapes of their interviews would be sealed in a private filing cabinet that is locked at all times in order to limit public access. As a final note, it is important that all participants are made to feel comfortable during interviews through reassuring their anonymity, and appreciation to their contribution of knowledge.

Interviews also posed two other major ethical considerations that needed to be considered when interviewing. These included an assessment of benefit versus harm and confidentiality (Kumar, 1996: 174). This research is focused on a highly emotionally charged issue that will no doubt impact on the participant's personal identity. Obviously, interviewing elicits private information from participants and the participants themselves may find they reveal things that they later decide are too sensitive to report (Kvale, 1996: 79). It was necessary for this study to ensure that the respondents did not walk away emotionally harmed, distressed, or betrayed, for this would have created a situation of harm exceeding benefit. Therefore to prevent such an instance from occurring, a general overview of the content of the interview was re-capped at the end of an interview and in the presence of the participant. This helped assure the participant that their opinions and interpretations were understood in a manner in which they intended. It also provided the participant the opportunity to withdraw some of their comments.

The final limitation involves confidentiality. Confidentiality is another ethical consideration, and the privacy of the participants must always be protected (Patton, 2002: 411). If confidentiality of participants was corrupted during the research and publication of this research, it could lead to not only the respondent feeling betrayed, but could also place the respondent at grave risk of being threatened or harmed. It becomes important therefore, to secure the confidentiality of each respondent by way of monitoring who has access to the material of this research, and how personal information is controlled and disseminated.

MAPPING THE LINKS BETWEEN **JIHAD AND TERRORISM**

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to compare and contrast the main findings within existing literature, and the opinions offered by the participants of this research. In order to adequately extract valuable conclusions to particular questions posed by this research, it is imperative to reveal and critically assess both participant opinions that either agree or disagree with available literature on specific themes that surrounds the analysis of Jihad and terrorism. Although it is recognised that such comparisons may not necessarily guarantee a new contribution of knowledge to the research already available on Jihad's association with terrorism, it will however at the very least, aid in the establishment of tentative conclusions, or reinforce datum that has already been discovered.

During the administration of the interviews, specific concepts or themes emerged that were of significance to this research. As such, it became necessary that each of these themes be critically assessed and analysed as their own entity in order to establish credible conclusions. These themes were ranked in order of relevance, usefulness and prevalence in exploring the relationship between Jihad and terrorism. In addition to these criteria, if participants discussed a particular issue in great detail, or, consistently revisited a particular issue on more than one occasion, then this indicated the

significance of the theme to this study. Thus, according to these guidelines in determining the significance of a theme or issue, the following emerged:

- (a) Major Misconceptions of Islam
- (b) The Debate Surrounding Jihad
- (c) Why Islam more than any other religion, is most associated with terrorism, and;
- (d) Muslim perceptions of terrorism and self-defence.

4.1 MAJOR MISCONCEPTIONS OF ISLAM

Islam and its many theological and cultural strands have been placed in the forefront of controversy, especially since 9/11, for reasons none other than it motivates some extremist Muslims to engage in terrorism to achieve some political or religious objective. Scholars like Akerman (2001) recommend that ‘half of the world’s most dangerous terrorist groups claim religion as their motivation, and over half of these terrorists are Muslim’ (p32). Here, Akerman insinuates a connection between Islam and terrorism. In furtherance to this claim, Warraq (2002) supports Akerman, and warns that some of the ideologies behind Islam instigated 9/11, and that if ‘...such acknowledgement is dismissed, then this would mean ignoring the obvious and forever misinterpreting events’ (Warraq, 2002:70).

According to these and many other negative claims against Islam, participants independently raised a collective protest against the manner in which Islam has become perceived in the West, particularly post 9/11. Muslim religious leaders vehemently indicated three of their most concerning misconceptions of Islam today. The most concerning misconception is the manner in which Jihad has

been perceived as a concept that exonerates terrorism. The second most significant misinterpretation of Islam is the claim that Islam is inherently a violent religion. Finally, the third most significant misinterpretation surrounds the claim that Muslims are anti-Christian.

4.1.1 Misconception 1: Jihad is a Religious Mandate Advocating Violence

Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas, Jamaah Islamiya, Fatah al-Islam and several other Islamic terrorist networks (according to Western judgment) all share one significant feature – they have each declared a Jihad at some point in time to vindicate their acts of political and religious violence. Modern Western audiences, even those which have had little or no familiarity with Jihad, observed such declarations and the violence that has followed, and have begun to assume an association between Jihad and violence. Such a modern (but certainly not new) association between Jihad and violence has ignited concern among Muslim communities regarding the image of Jihad. This is well evidenced by the Muslim participants who were interviewed in this research. Upon questioning ten Muslim religious leaders regarding what they believe to be the most ill-conceived sentiment of Islam post 9/11, respondents collectively felt that although there are many, Jihad is the most misconstrued concept of Islam today. Respondent A passionately contested the manner in which Jihad is understood in the West and protested:

“The most relevant term that is continually misinterpreted is Jihad. It is not violent...many Westerners are convinced that this motivates Muslims to become terrorists. Jihad means struggle or striving (for an honourable cause).

Everyone, even Christians and Jews, have performed Jihad in their life. Restraining your anger, dealing with a difficult client, saying no to drugs are all examples of Jihad.”

Other respondents agreed with respondent A and explained:

Respondent F:

“In the Western mind, Jihad has become interpreted as ‘Holy War’ and nothing else...We don’t support violence; let’s be very careful who we point to as being the enemy or point to as being the threat”

Respondent B:

“Jihad attracts different meanings - my understanding is fighting to submit oneself to God or Allah in everyday life. Jihad is about being a part of everyday life i.e. one has to be good to their neighbour, to their wife, to their family, to their friend - this is Jihad... Jihad is a personal action to become a better person. To do that, you have to do good...To suggest that terrorism is a form of Jihad is wrong because terrorism is violence without rule”

The majority of respondents indicated resentment and anger when referring to the way in which Jihad has become understood in the West as a purely violent concept. Interestingly, all but one participant were not empathetic towards the reasons as to why Jihad has been portrayed as a violent concept by the West.

Respondent B advised that Muslims should be aware of why Westerners perceive Jihad as a violent concept and explained that despite the fact that the majority of Muslims reject violence, Muslims and their history "...evidence a different story". Respondent B further explained:

"...Westerners understand Jihad in a manner in which they have witnessed its use by Muslim extremists in applying it to justify their acts of terrorism"

Other respondents were not as empathetic towards understanding why the West understands Jihad as a violent concept that exonerates Islamic terrorism. Instead, they vehemently expressed their disgust in the manner in which Jihad has become tarnished and exploited among Western interpretations. Some participants went so far as to suggest that Christian hatred of Islam has led to the association between Jihad and violence, and that the "...West has a plan to destroy the reputation of Islam and the East by tarnishing its religious concepts as violent"... (respondent D). Moreover, throughout the course of discussion during interviewing, participants sternly rejected any claim that violence is a vindication of Jihad, and persistently reinforced the point that the main tenet of Jihad is a personal struggle within oneself to be a decent person. Respondent C for instance, proved to be the religious leader who was most annoyed by the misinterpretations of Jihad and revealed:

"Islam is the most misunderstood religion... the accusations about Islam and Jihad are tremendous...There are many misunderstandings of Islam, an abundance of misreporting, several communication problems - even by Muslims themselves when they're trying to explain Jihad

for example, their limited English attracts misleading interpretation...Westerners are ignorant of Islam...There have been more Muslims killed in the past twenty years at the hands of non-Muslims, than non-Muslims been killed at the hands of Muslims. So as a result, if anyone really has a right to be afraid, it is the Muslims”

The event of 9/11 is but only one significant event to have wakened the West to the prominence of modern Islamic terrorism and Jihad. Numerous amounts of academic literature have been dedicated to exploring Jihad, but there still remains a lack of consensus as to its definition, and as such, the debate as to whether Jihad motivates acts of aggression and violence, remains tentative. Esposito (2005) and Abdallah (2002) have protested with great concern as to the manner in which Jihad has been depicted as a purely violent concept. These and other scholars contend that violence, although is a facet of Jihad, is not the main element of Jihad. Most Islamic scholars, who advise that Jihad is essentially a peaceful concept, agree that the main component of Jihad is personal striving – one’s internal battle between good and evil thought and action (Abdallah et al, 2002:2). This can include acts of fasting for one’s religion; working to provide for one’s family; studying; doing charity, or something as simple as avoiding an argument. In times when Jihad is violent however, Islamic scholars identify this act as Holy War, whereby a violent response in self-defence is unleashed. Even then, according to scholars, in such circumstances of self-defence, war should be a last resort.

Although participants originally and passionately rejected Western claims that Jihad is a violent concept (and blamed Western hatred of Islam for such assumptions), it was only in later discussion that participants changed the

direction of their arguments and revealed their agreement with scholars like Esposito (2005) and Abdallah (2002), that Jihad can in fact be violent. Participant D in particular offered contradicting accounts on Jihad. As indicated earlier, participant D alleged that the West was tarnishing Jihad as a violent concept in an attempt to strategically destroy the image of Islam. However, respondent D later admitted that:

“Jihad manifests itself in some very simple acts like looking after the family, working to bring home the bread and butter, to be good citizens of society, dealing with people equitably and fairly in every respect. There is also another branch of Jihad that calls for armed struggle – an army. This is under the condition however, that the Muslim community feels threatened...in this case, this has to be determined by the heads of the government or the heads of the societies - then they are obliged to follow such calls for war. An individual cannot take the law into his or her hands in order to do this sort of so-called armed struggle - they would have-have to follow the lead of their leaders. That’s when you have a Muslim umma or a Muslim sort of society”

Other participants who also admitted in later discussions that Jihad acknowledges violence, explained as respondent E did:

“Violent Jihad is only legitimate if it’s in defence and the head of a State has endorsed and ordered a ruling to fight against a particular group”

Respondent G explained Jihad completely in terms of self-defence:

“If you’re a country and another country comes to attack you, you’ve got no other choice but to fight. You have to stand firm; so, this is Jihad. The West interprets this as terrorism but it’s not. Islam does not support any other kind of violence except this kind of Jihad”

Similarly, respondent F defined Jihad in terms of self-defence and added:

“If Jihad takes place in the battlefield, it must only come to the battlefield only in moments of defence. It is normal for any person, community or state to defend themselves”

According to the analysis of those scholars mentioned earlier and the responses of participants regarding whether Jihad condones violence or not, the general consensus confirms that violence is in fact a connotation of Jihad. Despite many Islamic scholars like Siddiqi (2001), who insist that Jihad is a spiritual battle rather than a physical battle, many other experts like Faraj (1986) and Pipes (2002) elaborate the participant’s interpretations of Jihad, and explain that Jihad denotes violence in all its forms and applications. Additionally, extremists like Qutb (1998) question the reliability of peaceful interpretations of Jihad and advises “...those that interpret Jihad as a peaceful concept and only violent in times of self-defence, diminish the greatness of the Islamic way of life” (Qutb, 1998:21).

It has been claimed by some Islamic scholars like Akbar, that Jihad was born out of violence. Akbar, an academic and former politician of India, who, according to Pinault (2003) pays tribute to the military triumphs of the Prophet, advises that Jihad was born on the battlefield at the battle at Badr (p1). In both historical and contemporary times, there have been several other events that praise Islam's violent triumphs. For instance, one need only look to 9/11 and the 2002 Bali Bombings to realize that such violent actions, (and the ideologies of those Muslim extremists who orchestrated and delivered the attacks), are not entirely rejected by some Muslim communities. The media and government reports have, for the most part, depicted numerous reports that allude to segments within Muslim communities professing their support of Islamic terrorism. The Herald Sun for example, reported Abu Bakar Bashir's patriots justifying the Bali attacks:

“Australia's alignment with the US to subdue the Muslim world, are provocations for the attack” (Masanauskas, 2002:14:1).

Similarly, the Institute for War and Peace reported an Afghanistani Muslim publicly proclaiming his support of Bin Laden and the 9/11 attacks by stating:

“I am very happy about what happened on September 11...Bin Laden is a Mujahideen from the country of the Prophet Mohammed. His attacks on the U.S were Jihad...” (Tarakhil, 2004:1).

Further to these examples, NewTV in Lebanon reported the comments of a Lebanese Muslim Sheikh advising that:

“...The 9/11 operations were a response to great aggressive acts by America - its attacks on Afghanistan, on Iraq, on Sudan, not to mention the historic Crusades from long ago, and so on. They were magnificent, even though they were terrorists. The fact that they carried out a terrorist act does not prevent us from calling them ‘magnificent’ because this is what religious scholars call ‘commendable terrorism’...” (New TV, 2007).

These documented radical perspectives are among several other reports that reveal some Muslim communities condoning acts of Islamic terrorism. Since the topic began to demand serious attention, Jihad has not only attracted diverse arguments among Muslims and non-Muslims as to its definition and application, but it has also infused a highly contentious and sensitive debate as to whether Jihad is a violent religious mandate. For the most part, this is due to not only events like 9/11, but also the manner in which many Islamic terrorists and their sympathisers, (such as those indicated), have publicly proclaimed that Jihad exonerates acts of Islamic terrorism.

It is significant and thus worth considering mainstream Muslim and non-Muslim opinions on the definitions and applications of Jihad; but, it is even more scholarly significant for these definitions and applications to be strongly supported by Islamic experts. Islamic scholars have also contributed their violent interpretations of Jihad. Scholars in any discipline are recognised as experts with a comprehensive knowledge of a particular subject – this knowledge usually results from years of study and investigation into a specific subject. Thus, to dismiss the violent interpretations of Jihad by some scholars

is to ignore the attainment of the (original) intention of Jihad. Many like Qutb (1998), Akbar (2002), Faraj (1986) and Lewis (1988), argue that Jihad is warfare conducted against unbelievers (kafar). It is imperative to note that such opinions on the violent nature of Jihad do not go unsupported by Islam's religious laws. There are several relevant Islamic scriptures within the Quran which explicitly instruct Muslims to take up arms and fight. During interviewing, participants indicated two significant verses which are case specific to violent Jihad. Chapter 4, Verse 95-96 states that:

‘Not equal are those of the believers who sit (at home), except those who are disabled (by injury or are blind or lame), and those who strive hard and fight in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has preferred in grades those who strive hard and fight with their wealth and their lives above those who sit (at home). Unto each, Allah had promised good (paradise), but Allah has preferred those who strive hard and fight, above those who sit (at home) by a huge reward’ (Hilali., Khan, 1996:143).

This verse not only explicitly instructs Muslims to ‘fight with their lives,’ but also advises that God looks upon ‘those who fight’ with more favour than those Muslims who do not, by offering heavenly rewards to those that fight in the cause of Islam. The ‘cause of Islam’ however, is not specified within this verse. Perhaps this refers to self-defence or the spread of Islam. In any case, the aim here is not to assess the conditions of Jihad, but rather to establish whether violence is recognised as a connotation of Jihad. Evidently, in assessing the above verse, it is quite clear that the concept of Jihad and the

Quran, can perhaps recognise violence. This ultimately depends on the manner in which both Jihad and verse 4:95-96 are interpreted.

The most relevant verse that is characteristic of violent Jihad in the Quran however, is where God explicitly enforces upon Muslims that:

‘Jihad (holy fighting in Allah’s cause) is ordained for you (Muslims) though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know’ (Quran, 2:216)

Both Hilali and Khan’s translation of Jihad within the context of this verse allude to two significant points. First, Hilali and Khan identify Jihad as a form of ‘holy fighting in Allah’s cause with a full force of numbers and weaponry’ (Hilali., Khan, 1996: 51). This appears to insinuate a Muslim army. The second and the more significant interpretation of Jihad within Hilali and Khan’s translation of the Quran, is that:

‘...By Jihad Islam is established. Allah’s word is made superior and His religion is propagated. By abandoning Jihad Islam is destroyed and the Muslims fall into an inferior position; their honour is lost, their lands are stolen, their rule and authority vanish. Jihad is an obligatory duty in Islam on every Muslim, and he who tries to escape from this duty, or does not in his innermost heart wish to fulfil this duty, dies with one of the qualities of a hypocrite’ (Hilali., Khan, 1996:51).

Here, an important point is made about the survival of Islam. Hilali and Khan suggest that if Muslims do not fight in a Jihad, (and in the context of this verse, although scholars like Siddiqi would contest Hilali and Khan's interpretation that fighting is physical violence for the survival of Islam), then these Muslims are regarded as traitors of Islam. The reason for this is due to the simple fact that these Muslims are not contributing and sacrificing their lives for the permanence of Islam and its authoritative rule. Similarly, the participants of this study collectively agreed with Hilali and Khan's interpretation of verse 216, and advised that the explicit nature of the verse leaves little room for misinterpretation. In fact, when participants were asked to interpret the above verse from the Quran, all participants confirmed that it is a religious instruction for Muslims to take up arms and fight against those that threaten Islam and the Umma. Respondent E in particular recommended that:

“This passage is the legislation of Jihad...although the verse states that fighting may not appear to be good, Jihad prescribes that fighting may not be good now, but once you get into the spirit of fighting, then you will appreciate it, and you will come to see how different life can be”.

Interestingly, respondent C however, revealed a slightly different interpretation to that of other participants, and contended that fighting does not always translate into the literal physical sense of the word, but rather, can be pronounced to mean an internal struggle within one's self. Respondent C explained that “...struggling doesn't mean you have to be killing; fighting doesn't mean that you have to actually fight and kill...”. During participant C's verbal rationalization of the meaning of the above verse however, he

shifted from interpreting the verse as a peaceful instruction and then proceeded to conclude that "...maybe fighting has to be an armed struggle, I guess it doesn't discount that there."

Upon considering several interpretations of the above verses, it becomes evident that violence (or a just war) is recognised in Islam. Therefore, when examining why Jihad or Islam have become so strongly associated with terrorism, one can contend that it is due to both Islamic scripture and extremist Muslims publicly exonerating Islamic terrorists' actions under the banner of Jihad or Islam. Under these terms, it seems that Jihad is in keeping with not only Islamic scripture that instructs violent Jihad, but also with the manner in which some Muslims have applied Jihad to vindicate Islamic terrorism. For many Muslims however, even though they agree that Jihad acknowledges violence, there is widespread hurt and anger regarding the manner in which Jihad has become so severely tarnished, and insist that Jihad is not a completely violent concept. In fact, many like respondent E of this study contend that Jihad is ill conceived and regrets witnessing the "...West misinterpreting Jihad to mean violence...".

4.1.2 *Misconception 2: Islam is an Inherently Violent Religion*

The second most significant misinterpretation of Islam, according to participant opinion, is that Islam, as a religion in its entirety, is perceived as inherently violent. Saeed (2004) agrees with this as a misconception of Islam, and explains:

‘Many people in the West believe that Islam is a religion that teaches violence against non-Muslims and that,

compared to people of other faiths, Muslims are more likely to be violent and intolerant. This belief is largely based on negative images that existed in medieval Christian Europe about Islam and Muslims; for example, Muslims were falsely thought to be barbaric, violent and fanatical, an image that has continued to the twenty-first century. My own observations have convinced me that the mind of the average Westerner holds an utterly distorted image of Islam' (p59).

It is one thing to allege that Islam can, for an extremist Muslim, have a motivational effect towards becoming violent, but it is a more serious accusation to claim that Islam upholds a direct connection with breeding Islamic terrorists. Since 9/11 however, the association has become prevalent, thus pressing the importance of exploring the association between Islam and violence. Participants indicated three specific reasons as to why they believe Islam has become so strongly associated with violence:

1. Islam is accused of supporting 9/11 and permits the act of fighting and killing.
2. Numerous suicide bombings have caused a link between Islam and violence.
3. There is concern that Islam has survived as a result of the violent path of the Prophe, thus setting a precedent for Muslims to follow.

In obtaining these participant explanations, it becomes the obligation of this research to critically assess the reliability of these reasons in explaining why Islam has become perceived by many in the West as a violent religion.

9/11 and Fighting and Killing in Islam

A disappointed ex-Malaysian PM revealed that ‘...it is most unfortunate that some have labelled Islam as a violent religion’ (Hong, 2005:1). This, he believes, has resulted in Islam being perceived as a religion that is vicious and violent towards those outside the Umma. Others like Esposito and Siddiqi are also concerned about the violent image of Islam, and profess that Islam is not all about fighting and killing (Esposito, 2005:93; Hong, 2005:1; Siddiqi, 2001:1). Although the participants of this study agree that Islam is not a violent religion, they further added that the event of 9/11 and Western discrimination against Islam have further contributed to Islam’s image to be one of violence in the West. Respondent F for example, revealed that;

“The West is not honest in their explanation, in their statements about Islam and terrorism. There is terrorism in Ireland, and there is much terrorism in the world. But why is Islam the focal religion? It’s always Islam. It’s unfair to draw the attention of the world to Islam because of 9/11. The action of September 11, London and Bali are terrorist acts. Nobody can say it’s not a terrorist act to kill innocent people...But here there is question mark – who did it? Of course it is in the mind of the Western people and according to the way the media has brought it to the world that the Muslims did it”

Respondent F acknowledges that it is terrorist events like 9/11 which have raised the question as to Islam’s relationship with terrorism, and alludes to a

pivotal issue – “who did it?” Interestingly, all participants admitted to their belief that Muslims are being sabotaged by the West, and that the religious identity of the perpetrators of 9/11 is of great concern to them. Despite no specific question being presented to the participants regarding Islam’s involvement in 9/11 or other terrorist attacks, several participants defensively professed that they do not believe that Muslims were behind these attacks. Respondent D was most offended by the accusation that Muslim perpetrators from Al Qaeda were responsible for the 9/11 attacks and claimed that:

“It could be Western propaganda to dirty the clean name of Islam. Islam is a threat to Christianity and other religions, and therefore it works in the favour of their leaders to gather hatred towards Islam in order to keep Muslims under political control. It is not necessarily the case that those who committed that acts of September 11 are Muslim, they could in fact be from another religion. However, the West has proceeded to demonize Islam and stereotype all Muslims as potential terrorists”

Furthermore, respondents A and B also contested the suggestion that the 9/11 terrorists were Muslim:

“It is not right to accuse Islam as the force behind the events of 9/11 just because they found a passport that was partially burnt with the name of Mohammed on it. There were four hundred Jews who cancelled their flights on the day of 9/11... now is this coincidence? I don’t know- nobody knows (respondent B)...Also there were a large

number of Jewish people that worked in the twin tower, who took leave on that date - is that coincidence or not coincidence? ... Think about it, nobody knows (respondent A)”

The controversial nature of the above sentiments imply complete disregard of any evidence that has been discovered by the US government that implicates Muslim extremists from Al Qaeda, as the terrorists who orchestrated the 9/11 attacks. In 2003, a federal jury in the US sentenced Al Qaeda operative, Zacarias Moussaoui to life imprisonment for his role in 9/11 (United States Court of Appeal, 2003-2004:3-62), but according to all the participants of this study, the US Court of Appeal is mistaken.

Despite participants strongly disagreeing to Muslim involvement in the orchestration of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, participants did however agree that 9/11 was the first major terrorist event (within contemporary times in the West), to have re-ignited a connection between Islam and violence, or Islam and terrorism. This is mostly due to the many reports published by Western media and governments, which detailed:

- Islamic terrorists employing Islamic concepts like Jihad and the verses from the Quran to condone the 9/11 attacks (and other terrorist attacks that followed)
- Islamic terrorists waging a Holy War or Jihad against Western infidels
- Islamic terrorist sympathisers publicly revealing their support of Islamic terrorism against the West

- Islamic terrorism events and the motivations/ideologies behind such attacks

Such reports geared Australians and others in the West into believing that Muslims are anti-Western, and are prepared to engage in the most extreme measures of violence against them. The motive for such violence is, according to Islamic terrorists and their sympathisers, to defend Islam and its community against Western oppression, particularly in the Middle East (Australian Government - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2004: 8). Several debates however, have ensued between experts, governments and religious communities as to the credibility of such controversial statements and issues.

One such debate is revolved around Islam's position on violence. Several statements have been declared post 9/11 by segments of the international Muslim community that portray Islam as a violent religion. For instance, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a Muslim extremist, announced that "...President Bush is the enemy of God, the enemy of Islam and the enemy of Muslims...America declared war against God....so God has declared war against America and Bush" (Chomsky, 2005:272). In a report collated by the Australian Government, an Al-Qaeda operative promoted the killing of Americans and their allies, civilians and military (Australian Government - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2004:8). Among other reports, extremist Muslims like Mr Hamza revealed that '...infidels are like germs and viruses...Muslims must spread by the sword...there is no drop of liquid loved by Allah more than the blood of infidels...' (Gardham, 2006:1). These are but only three statements among many others within domestic and international media, which indicate an overwhelming sense of dedication by some segments

of the Muslim community to engage in violence for the protection and permanence of Islam.

Extremist statements such as these do not stop with Islamic terrorists and their sympathizers. In fact, although there are many academics such as Nasr (2003) and Esposito (2005) that contest such extremist views of Islam, there are however some academic opinions that are in agreement. For instance, Warraq (2002) suggests that ‘...Islam is not a moderate religion’ (p 75) and Akbar (2002) insists that ‘Islam is essentially a soldier’s religion’ (p10). More alarmingly, Faraj (in Jensen 1986) advises that ‘...the Quran is fundamentally about warfare...true soldiers of Islam are willing to use any means available in order to achieve their righteous goals...’ (pp 202-203). Providing that one is not familiar with the main tenets of Islam, one can judge from the comments of scholars such as Warraq, Akbar and Faraj, that the Quran preaches violence so explicitly, that Islam can be accused of harbouring violent religious instruction. One can therefore empathise with why Australians and others in the West have come to fear Islam as a religion that supports fighting and killing. Whether it is due to (a) Western ignorance of Islam; (b) the manner in which Muslim extremists have projected Islam post 9/11; (c) the manner in which academics have projected Islam, or (d) that Islam does in fact instruct a Muslim to fight and kill, Islam as a result, is perceived by many in the West to be a religion for the extremist that is most befitting for the terrorist.

As soon as one goes beyond exploring expert opinions of Islam’s stance on violence, the arguments of how an Islamic terrorist religiously sanctions their acts of fighting and killing emerges as an issue for further investigation. Of course, although there are religious concepts such as Jihad and martyrdom that contribute to an Islamic terrorist exonerating their acts of violence, there are

however, other less theological theories that work towards explaining an Islamic terrorist using Islam to vindicate their violence. Theorists such as Fazel (1997), Hoffman (1995) and others have dedicated most of their careers on the subject matter of religiously inspired violence and as such, have emerged with two significant theories that work towards explaining why religious violence exists. The following rationales are not the only two theories to have emerged in explaining the reasons as to why a Muslim or any other individual among other faiths engage in violence, but these are the most relevant to this study.

The first theory is commonly referred to as religious supremacy, whereby an individual is inspired to engage in violence against those outside their religion because (a) the perpetrator regards other religions as counterfeits to their own faith, and (b) other religions are an evil opposition to their own faith (Fazel, 1997:2). The second theory alludes to the process of demonization, whereby the individual perceives their adversary as not just an enemy, but rather the spawn of the devil (White, 2002:54) and as such, killing the devil becomes a moral and sacramental act (Hoffman, 1995:273). Academics debate as to whether it is religion itself or personality that drives a religious terrorist to kill. For instance, Harris (1990) and Russell (1983) assess that religion may not necessarily be the cause of a religious individual becoming violent, but rather that it is the extremist that drives a religion and interprets its laws in such a way that their actions become justified by that religion (Harris, 1990:438). Others like Hoffman argue that for some terrorist groups, religion serves as a legitimizing force conveyed by sacred text or imported via clerical authorities claiming to speak for the divine (Hoffman, 1998:59). Here two questions arise - is it religion itself that corrupts an individual and motivates them to violently target those that do not conform to their religion, or, is it the extremist

interpretation of an individual that exploits the religion? In assessing both these views, it becomes necessary therefore that a brief overview of some Islamic scripture be analysed in order to at the very least establish some credible assumptions as to whether Islam can motivate a Muslim to commit acts of terrorism.

Upon observing Islamic scripture, it becomes evident that some religious text can, for some Muslims and non-Muslims, be interpreted to instruct Muslims to fight, and thus employ terrorism. One such verse that is indicative of violence in Islam is as follows:

‘Fight against those among the People of the Book who do not believe in God and the last day, who do not forbid what God and his messenger have forbidden, and who do not consider the true religion as their way of life’ (Quran 9:29).

Literalism of this verse would indicate that violence is an explicit instruction for Muslims. There are two significant points worth noting in this verse. First, it is clear that the above verse makes no reference to self-defence as a reason to engage in violence, but rather, authoritatively instructs Muslims to fight against those that are not Muslim. Here, it is assumed that Islamic extremists employ the process of demonization. Undoubtedly in any battle or conflict, there is a subjective distinction between which side is inherently good, and which side is inherently bad. In the eyes of the Islamic extremist, the world is divided into good and evil, and of course, for the Islamic terrorists, they prescribe their position in a conflict as intrinsically good. Thus, the act of fighting and killing what they perceive as evil is a justified religious duty that is spiritually rewarded. This is a pressing reason as to why religious terrorists

are so convinced of their cause and rarely bear the weight of a guilty conscience when their actions result in the deaths of others.

The second point is that although there is no explicit instruction in this verse for Muslims to fight for the purpose of spreading Islam, it does however have an implicit connotation. In any situation, to dominate, oppress or fight against another group, is to engage in some form of struggle against those that do not conform to a particular group or ideology. In the context of the above verse, fighting those that do not conform to Islam is to either exterminate or dominate, which in the end perhaps translates to (forced) conversion. The expansion of Islam is, next to self-defence, one of the most debated reasons as to why Islamic terrorists engage in violence and proceed to exonerate such violence with Jihad. The spread of Islam as an objective of Jihad has been a long standing issue. Many extremist Muslims like Al-Qadafi for instance, have publicly instructed non-Muslims to convert to Islam, or otherwise face violent repercussions (Al-Jazeera, 2006:1). After all, if Islamic extremists punish those that are perceived as evil, non-Muslims would in the end want to avoid punishment, or worse yet death for not being a Muslim - thus conversion would be an option to avoid such suppression. Perhaps this is a reason why the West also perceives Islam as an intolerant religion. In using terrorism as an instrument of Jihad, Islamic extremists are able to dominate, fight and punish other religions in order to spread Islam and reign it as most supreme.

Despite the likelihood of the above interpretation of verse 9:29 appearing relevant and true, the participants of this research challenged and strongly objected to any suggestion that this verse is a violent religious instruction against non-believers with the aim of converting them to Islam. Specifically,

participants strongly protested against any claim that Jihad is a concept that justifies forced conversion of non-Muslims and violent domination. In fact, the manner in which some verses of the Quran have been interpreted as violent in the West, has caused many of the participants of this study to feel offended and exploited. Respondent C in particular stated:

“This is not a violent verse... it is America and Israel trying to fool Westerners into believing that Islam is a threat to Christians, Jews and others. America and Israel are trying to wipe out Muslims by instilling fear and hatred into those that are not Muslim...Western fabrication of Islam as an intolerant and violent religion, and that Muslims want to convert the world, is the best way to encourage negativity of Islam...”

In a similar light to the brief translation posed by respondent C of verse 9:29, Hallaq (1997), who is one of the most eminent scholars in the field of Islamic law, challenged the violent interpretations of this verse and advised that such translation is in fact incorrect. Hallaq recommends that those who understand verse 9:29 as violent, misunderstand the initial intention of the message. Hallaq states:

“...those who misunderstand such scripture as a categorical command enjoining Muslims to fight the people of the scriptures, misunderstands...all that this verse commands is that fighting must be initiated only against those among the scripturalists who do not believe in God and the last judgement. And one surely cannot conclude from this verse

that the scripturalists must be fought until they convert to Islam...all it says is that those who follow the heels of Muslims for the purpose of attacking them must be fought back...” (Hallaq, 1997: 237-238).

Thus, Hallaq’s translation is quite clear: there is no instruction for Muslims to be violent unless such action is in response to self-defence, and Muslims are not permitted to forcefully convert non-Muslims to Islam. Saeed (2004) collectively agrees with Hallaq’s interpretation of verse 9:29 and further explains why this and many other verses in the Quran are mistakenly interpreted as violent. Saeed explains:

‘Some people point to a small number of verses in the Quran that seem to advocate killing of non-Muslims. These verses, however, must be taken in their correct context and not misrepresented by isolating them from other verses in the Quran...’ (p 67).

Saeed alludes to an important point here - each verse must be understood in terms of the context in which it is explained. For instance, another verse within the Quran which can be translated as violent instruction for Muslims is 9:14:

‘Fight against them so that Allah will punish them by your hands and disgrace them and give you victory over them...’
(Quran, 9:14).

In this passage, perhaps one translation of this verse could indicate God instructing Muslims to take up arms and fight. Furthermore, God reassures his people that He will punish the disbelievers and disgrace them by making the Umma victorious over them. Despite this being one perspective in translating the above verse, it is important according to Saeed (2004), to be aware of the context within which it is depicted. In evaluating the context of this verse, it is useful to investigate the verses that come before and after it. In doing this, God's instruction to 'fight' is made explicit because God also prescribes conditions to such violence in preceding verses, such that Muslims should attack those disbelievers that '...attack Islam with disapproval and criticism...' (Quran, 9:12). Here, fighting is not only relevant to verse 9:14, but is also recognised and advocated in Islam with strict conditions of self-defence. The acknowledgement of self-defence is recognised as a form of Jihad by Respondent H, who affirms:

"Jihad and Holy War are severely misinterpreted. If a Muslim is being persecuted or attacked, Jihad or Holy War can be used to defend himself. There are however, conditions of engaging in Holy War. If a Muslim is directly attacked or prevented from practicing his religion, he can use any method of Jihad to defend himself. This can be through peaceful methods such as verbal or literary negotiation, or violence"

Furthermore, Respondent J explains:

"God is instructing the Muslims to fight against the non-believers or infidels. Those who fight and die are honoured

as martyrs. They should not kill innocent civilians. It should only be in a battlefield - soldier against soldier and in self-defence”

In assessing the arguments surrounding whether Islam condones fighting and killing, two arguments emerged. For some, Islam encourages fighting and killing – this can, according to the manner in which it is interpreted, be evidenced in religious text. Furthermore, events like 9/11 and extremist opinions further add to this perspective. For others however, Islam does not permit violence except under specified conditions in Jihad³³. Upon acknowledging and analysing literature, case studies and academia on both sides, one begins to realize that such analysis does not begin to alleviate the task of resolving the debate of whether Islam advocates violence or not. Rather, confusion mounts further, and the topic remains inconclusive with no definitive answers. One therefore, can only surmise that the manner in which religious text is understood and applied, is determined by its users. Furthermore, the magnitude of accusations, events and justifications on both sides surfaces, and further alludes to several missing pieces to a very complex puzzle.

Suicide Bombers, Martyrdom and Jihad

According to participant opinion, the second most significant reason as to why Islam has become perceived by the West as a violent religion is due to (a) Muslim suicide attacks such as 9/11, that have demonstrated that suicide bombing, in its many forms, is characteristic of martyrdom and Islam, and (b)

³³ Refer to 5.2.3 for the conditions of violent Jihad

condoning responses by some of the Muslim communities that hail such acts, as martyr operations. The debate of whether suicide bombing is permitted in Islam is, like Jihad, not only complex but also highly contentious. Thus, the extent to which this research can encapsulate and discuss the multi-faceted avenues surrounding whether Islam accepts suicide bombing, is abbreviated as a result of the length limitations that restrict this paper. Therefore, this section seeks to only assess some very basic perspectives that surround whether suicide bombing is recognised as martyrdom and as an act of Jihad.

Martyrdom, as indicated in chapter 2, is the act of dying at the hands of an enemy of Islam during battle, whilst self-martyrdom is the act of suicide in the aim of defending Islam, or making some religious statement or protest. Usually this results in numerous casualties among their target group. Although many academics and all the participants of this study agree to the definition of martyrdom, the application of self-martyrdom however attracts two competing perspectives. The first perspective maintains that suicide (in any form) for the cause of Islam is vindicated by both Jihad and martyrdom. Hassan (2001), director of the United Nations Information Service in Vienna, and spokesperson for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime documented an interview with an Imam affiliated with Hamas, who revealed his thoughts on suicide bombing. He explained:

... the first drop of blood shed by a martyr during Jihad washes away his sins instantaneously. On the Day of Judgment, he will face no reckoning. On the Day of Resurrection, he can intercede for seventy of his nearest and dearest to enter Heaven; and he will have at his disposal seventy-two houris, the beautiful virgins of

Paradise. The Imam took pains to explain that the promised bliss is not sensual (Hassan, 2001:6).

In addition to this sentiment, extremist Muslim preacher Mr Hamza, professes that taking one's own life in defence of Islam '...is not called suicide, it is called martyrdom" (Gardham, 2006:1). Similarly, Ezzati (1986) opines that martyrdom is when a Muslim is prepared to struggle and fight and die for the sake of Islam – and those that do, are honoured as martyrs (p2). Interestingly, within these and many other parallel arguments, martyrdom and Jihad are introduced as sharing some relationship. Jihad is the initiation and engagement of a violent act against the enemies of Islam, whilst martyrdom is the remembrance of that Muslim person or group after a Jihad - those who perish during Jihad, are hailed and remembered as martyrs. These martyrs are promised in the Quran the reward of an afterlife which has gold palaces, sumptuous feasts and obliging women (Gold, 2003: 75; Hassan, 2001:6).

One need look no further than Hezbollah to realise that there are certain segments within Muslim communities that advocate suicide in the name of Islam and praise such acts as martyr operations. Hezbollah requires their reserved suicide bombers to attend classes in which trained Islamic instructors focus on particular verses from the Quran and the Hadith, that stress the glory of dying for Allah and martyrdom (Barker, 2002:118). Perhaps the aspiring suicide bombers of Hezbollah and those Muslims who flew the planes into the twin towers overcame the fear of death by the incentive of being remembered as martyrs, and the rewards offered by God after their death.

The second perspective, which competes with the first, contends that suicide, under any condition, is acknowledged as a grave sin and as such, no religious

concept within Islam justifies such acts - no matter the cause. According to Saeed (2004), the life of a suicide bomber is wasted because it is a grave sin in Islam to take one's own life and the life of women, children and the innocent (p60). Furthermore, Juergensmeyer (2000) and Schwartz (2005) both argue that martyrdom operations are acts of religious extremism – the organizations who recruit them to detonate themselves in crowds of civilians have manipulated religious fervour by wedding the ideas of heavenly rewards to martyrdom, encouraging their followers to believe they will ascend straight to heaven and enter paradise (Bloom, 2005:1). Similarly, respondent J neatly protested against suicide in Islam, and stated that:

“Suicide is without a doubt a grave sin and a violation of Islamic teachings.”

Furthermore, respondent G explains:

“...unjustified violence is a complete violation of Islamic teachings...there are strict stipulations for fighting. The Prophet Muhammad stated: Do not kill women or children or clergy, do not cut down a tree, do not destroy an inhabited place, and do not take that which is not yours. Suicide is forbidden in Islam...”

Finally, respondent J although agreed that Islam does not condone suicide, empathetically explained why suicide in Islam occurs:

“Some people are hurt and need to respond to that hurt...the Palestinians have been suffering from America's

promise to the Jews to have Palestine...Who gave America the right to give Palestine to somebody else; to bring them over and take over? Many Palestinians fled from their own country - they ran away as refugees. Palestinians came to a stage where they felt there is no life, there is no dignity, there is no respect for life for themselves and that is why some of them started to take part in suicide bombing. They think; "if I'm alive, I'm nothing. Nobody cares about me. What an idea. Why should I kill myself, I go and kill somebody else...Suicide bombing doesn't mean that it's a right thing to do, but it is a situation where people find themselves, that they have to do something. In Islam, suicide is forbidden. You have no right to take your own life. This is unacceptable in Islam. One has no right to take their life. Many people in the West have not been through oppression, that's why they can't imagine the exact misery of their battle for life or death. The West does not give them the right judgment. They accuse these people of doing the wrong thing. People need to know that whatever they are doing, others are doing much worse than them. Much, much worse"

Although there are several verses within the Quran that reflect Allah's praise of martyrs who engage in Jihad by offering them great spiritual rewards³⁴, it does not necessarily encourage suicide of any sort. One such verse in the Quran which explicitly denounces any act of suicide is as follows:

³⁴ Refer to Chapter 2, section 2.4.1 and 2.4.2

‘...Whoever purposely throws himself from a mountain and kills himself, will be in Hell... and whoever drinks poison and kills himself with it, he will be carrying his poison in his hand and drinking it in Hell...and whoever kills himself with an iron weapon, will be carrying that weapon in his hand and stabbing his abdomen with it in the Hell...’
(Quran, 7:670).

In referring to this verse, it becomes evidently clear that suicide is not a prescriptive element of Islam, but rather a violation that is punishable with Hell. Thus, for a Muslim to be a martyr, suicide is not an avenue in which such recognition can be rewarded. Scholars to the like of Lewis (2003), Saeed (2004) and As-Sanani, (1996) recommend that the only condition that a Muslim can be acknowledged as a martyr is when, and only when, a Muslim is killed (for the sake of Islam) at the hands of their enemy in a battle, and not by suicide. This illuminates an important point raised earlier in chapter 2 when referring to the conditions of the lesser Jihad – if a Muslim wants to be rewarded and remembered as a martyr engaging in a Jihad, then their violent act must be executed on the battlefield against an enemy that threatens Islam (Motiar, 2001:3; Lewis, 2003:34). The battlefield, according to some of the available literature on Jihad, is the only legitimate opportunity for a Muslim to violently defend Islam and thus, inherit the award of martyrdom. This contributes to the instructions sanctioned by Jihad that violence is only permitted in circumstances of self defence³⁵.

³⁵ Refer to section 4.1.1

According to one perspective on suicide, the Muslim extremist bears no limitations in the manner in which their violence is executed, but the intent of their violence must be to defend or further Islam. Under such circumstances, a Muslim is permitted to plunge to their own death in the plight of making some usually vague statement. Such bravery warrants, according to this perspective, being remembered and honoured as a martyr, and the act is Jihad. The competing perspective however, prohibits suicide in all its forms. Within this viewpoint, a Muslim can only be honoured as a martyr if their death results at the hands of their enemy whilst defending Islam and/or its community on a battlefield, and not suicide. In weighing both discussions against verses in the Quran, it can be tentatively estimated that those Muslims that believe that Islam acknowledges suicide, feed off their own ideological interpretations of selected verses, and not the intended messages behind these verses. Although there are many references in the Quran that instruct Muslims to take up arms and fight, at no point is there any unequivocal allowance for suicide – the Quran makes this quite explicit, particularly in verse 7:670.

Mohammed's reputation as a Prophet

The third and final reason why Islam has become perceived as a violent religion in the West is, according to participants, the manner in which the life of the Prophet has been violently depicted. It is beyond the scope of this research to critically analyse the life of the Prophet and how Islam emerged and survived, as this would require an entire research project dedicated to the Prophet's biography. It is imperative, however, to at least briefly outline some of the claims that have been levelled at the reputation of the Prophet, in order to begin to reveal the complexities surrounding whether or not Islam emerged from violence.

In a daring account on Islam, violence and the Prophet, Cobb (2002) examines the link between violence and Muslims, and violence and the Prophet:

‘If Islam does not condone violent acts, why do they occur? How are we to account for the assassination of Anwar Sadat...the fatwa against Salmon Rushdie, the 1993 World Trade Centre truck bomb, the 1997 ambush of tourists in Egypt... destruction of ancient Buddhist statues...and now the body count from the attacks of September 11? If Islam does not lend support to such actions, on what grounds do members of Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and al-Jihad identify themselves as dedicated Muslims who follow in the footsteps of Muhammad and his Companions?...The perpetrators of these crimes certainly believe about themselves that they are devout Muslims carrying out the will of God in designing and executing these acts of terror, that their actions are sanctioned by Islamic law. They are readers of the Quran and followers of recognized mullahs, scholars and jurists, some with credentials from the most respected institutions in the Muslim world...’ (Cobb, 2002:138).

In assessing this question, Cobb encapsulates many pressing concerns that have been raised among Westerners regarding Islam and its association with violence. Cobb explains that such violent imagery of Islam has not only eventuated because of the many orchestrated acts of violence by ‘devout’ Muslims, but also because of the alleged violent reputation of the Prophet

himself. Both historical and modern literature is replete with contradictory arguments surrounding the peaceful or violent emergence of Islam; however one of the most contested historical accounts of Islam is the life of the Prophet. Although Armstrong (2000) disagrees that this is mostly due to the lack of proven documented evidence on his life, Armstrong contends that the Hadith and the Sunna provide authentic description of the life and teachings of the Prophet such that:

‘...Eyewitness reports (Hadith) were collected about the Prophet’s teaching and behaviour, which, during the ninth century, were carefully sifted to ensure that Muslims had an authentic record of his sayings and religious practice (Sunna). The law schools reproduced this Muhammadan paradigm in their legal systems, so that Muslims all over the world could imitate the way the Prophet spoke, ate, washed, loved and worshipped...’ (p39)

The length limitations faced by this research confine the inclusion of most relevant resources that assess the life of the Prophet. In considering this point carefully, and the argument posed by Armstrong, it is befitting to refer the Sunna and the Hadith, as the primary resources upon which the life of the Prophet will be explored. Before proceeding however, it is important to raise the caution that despite the availability of such literature that documents the Prophet’s life, it does not alleviate the unending task of interpreting the intended messages of the Prophet. Therefore, contradicting accounts emerge as to whether the Prophet was in fact offensively or defensively violent.

There is a collective amount of scholarly work that explain Mohammed as a peaceful man whose sole purpose was only to deliver the words of Allah's teachings unto others (Brown, 2004:75; Nasr, 1994:22). However, during the course of his career, the Prophet unfolded a major military campaign against those that opposed Muslims. According to Al-Mubarakpuri (1996) some of these wars were the battle at Badr (p.210), the battle of Uhd (p.245) and the battle of Mu'tah (p.383). According to certain Hadith and verses within the Quran however, the Prophet himself was not a violent man, and this was not the cause of him leading many raiding expeditions. Rather, these expeditions were in self-defence. Passages in the Hadith testify that '...the Prophet's life was not the only target of the wicked schemes, but rather the lives and the whole entity of the Muslims...' (Al-Mubarakpuri, 1996:200). For this reason, the Prophet unleashed a defensive war path against those that persecuted the Prophet and his followers.

In addition to scholarly perspectives on the Prophet, it was imperative for this research to also establish how Muslims in Melbourne understand their Prophet because he is for all Muslims, the point of reference upon which Islamic customs, laws and beliefs are based. Participants were presented with a question that inquired into whether they believed that their Prophet had ever engaged in violence during the course of his life. However, for reasons that could not be identified, participants either did not answer the question or answered it indirectly. Only two participants briefly offered their opinions on the life of the Prophet. Respondent B confirmed the Hadith's testimony that the Prophet was a peaceful man and only violent in times of self-defence:

“Mohammed only ever engaged in violence when he had to protect himself from those who persecuted him”

Respondent H understands the Prophet's life in a similar way, but further explains that the concept of Jihad emerged from the Prophet's war against those who threatened the existence of Islam:

“...he became violent to defend Islam's existence - there was no other way...this is why Jihad emerged...”

Neither respondent B nor H elaborated any further to their statements on the Prophet. As such, little information was extracted from these and other participants, despite probing them to offer their opinions as to the kind of life they believed their Prophet led.

Despite literature and some participant opinion that explain Mohammed as a peaceful Prophet, there is, however, contesting theological literature surrounding the idea that Islam has survived by 'means of military victory' (Khan, 1996:584; Weyer, 2001:45). It is further alleged that the Prophet himself led over a hundred raiding expeditions throughout the course of his career as a Prophet. It is agreed among most scholars that these expeditions were in self-defence; however, division emerges when assessing other reasons as to why the Prophet engaged in violence. These scholars contend that in addition to self-defence, the Prophet's violent path was also unleashed to forcefully convert others to Islam (Akbar, 2002:17-18; Walker, 1998: 121)³⁶. According to this perspective, it was upon the first expedition (the battle at Badr) that violent Jihad was born. Here, the battle at Badr is where the

³⁶ This contradicts a specific verse in the Quran that instructs Muslims that there should be '...no compulsion in religion...' (Quran, 2:256).

background against which a major military operation unfolded³⁷ and those whom died in Jihad became recognized as martyrs (Weyer, 2001:4). A testimony in the book of Al-Bukhari, the Prophet explains the conditions of Jihad by expressing his terms of warfare against the Quraish tribes:

‘...no doubt the war has weakened the Quraish and they have suffered great losses, so if they wish, I will conclude a truce with them, during which they should refrain from interfering between me and the people (i.e. the Arab infidels other than Quraish), and if I have victory over those infidels, Quraish will have the option to embrace Islam as the other people do...but if they do not accept the truce, by Allah I will fight them defending my cause till I get killed...’ (Khan, 1996:567).

It is not quite clear what the Prophet meant by ‘a truce’ in this instruction. Is truce referring to acceptance and conversion to Islam, or the laying down of arms? Some scholars like Akbar (2002) have adopted the latter application of truce and recommend that such interpretation has extended itself to current times. Those Muslims who understand the Prophet as a leader that engaged in violence to further Islam also adopt this belief and use the Prophet’s violent paths as a model with which to follow. For example, in a 1998 interview with Frontline, Bin Laden stated:

"Our call is the call of Islam that was revealed to Muhammad. It is a call to all mankind. We have been

³⁷ Refer to footnote 27 and appendix IV

entrusted with good cause to follow in the footsteps of the Messenger and to communicate his message to all nations....Allah created us to worship Him and to follow in his footsteps and to be guided by His Book. I am one of the servants of Allah and I obey his orders. Among those is the order to fight for the word of Allah...It is also our duty to send a call to all the people to embrace Islam...our primary mission is nothing but the furthering of this religion" (Miller, 1995-2007:2).

Bin Laden alludes to an important objective here – ‘our mission is the furthering of this religion’. Again, it is not explicitly clear how Bin Laden intends to further Islam; however, in looking to his reputation, it can be accredited to translate to violent methods.

The reputation of the Prophet, much like Jihad, attracts diverse perspectives. Most scholars, Muslims and non-Muslims, agree that the Prophet did lead several military campaigns, but only in the times when the Prophet felt threatened and felt the need to act in self-defence. Other arguments, however, although agree to this perspective, extend this point further to include other harbored motives for the Prophet’s violent war path. According to this image of the Prophet, violence was not only executed for reasons of self-defense, but also to forcibly compel infidels to convert to Islam – ensuring the spread and survival of Islam. In assessing this argument, this study does not invalidate such a claim against the Prophet, but rather questions its credibility for reasons that the Quran is explicit in its denouncement of forced conversion. Specifically, verse 2:256 of the Quran instructs Muslims that there should be ‘...no compulsion in religion...’ (Quran, 2:256).

Thus, the general consensus indicates that the Prophet was indeed violent in times of self-defence. However, the claim that the Prophet also engaged in violence in order to compel non-believers to become Muslim, is a questionable assertion levied against the Prophet. This is mostly due to the fact that the Quran is explicit in condemning forced conversion. In recommending this, it is important to be aware that this research bears no expertise in either crediting or discrediting such postulation.

4.1.3 *Misconception 3: Islam is an Intolerant Religion*

Finally, the third most significant misconception of Islam expressed by the participants of this study is that Muslims are intolerant of other religions. More specifically, Islam has become a religion that is perceived to inhabit fervent resentment towards Christians and Jews – no event in contemporary time evidences this more than 9/11. This, and other Islamic terrorist attacks such as those in Bali, London and Madrid, exemplify Muslim extremists' agenda to destroy and intimidate non-Muslim States and any Muslim and non-Muslim State that align themselves with the West. Such terrorism is not the only element that has contributed to Islam's image as being an intolerant religion. In fact, not only have there been many anti-Christian and anti-Jewish sentiments within the media and Islamic literature, there are also passages in the Quran that instruct intolerance towards Christians and Jews. Before delving into the reasons as to how Islam has become perceived as an intolerant religion, it is important to be aware that there are issues in this section which are beyond the scope and purpose of this research - as such, this hinders credible inquiry into whether Islam is an intolerant religion (this would otherwise require the dedication of an entire research project). Rather, the main aim of this section is

only to establish how and why Islam has become perceived as an intolerant religion, rather than critically analyse the arguments surrounding whether in fact Islam actually is.

The first reason, as to why Islam is perceived as an intolerant religion, is as a result of Muslim extremists' revealing great detestation against Christians and Jews, and anti-Christian and anti-Jewish passages in the Quran. Yemen leader Al-Qadafi, publicly professed his hatred towards Christians, and explained that: "...if Jesus was alive when Mohammed was sent, he would have followed him. All people must be Muslim" (Al-Jazeera, 2006). Furthermore, when Sheikh Bakri was asked to comment on 9/11, he professed that the 9/11 attacks were magnificent and that Bin Laden had revived the neglected duty of Jihad (New TV, 2007). The neglected duty of Jihad, according to Faraj (1986), is to establish a true Islamic State over the entire human population (Faraj, 1986:202-203). According to these and many other extremist Muslim opinions, not only is intolerance imbedded in their sentiments, but it is explicitly clear that intolerance is not only extended towards Christians and Jews, but also to other religions.

Unfortunately, upon examining beyond these intolerant sentiments, it becomes evidently clear that anti-Christian connotations do not stop with Islamic extremists. In fact, the Quran lends itself to the second reason why Islam is perceived as an intolerant religion. There are several verses within the Quran that are indicative of Islam's intolerance towards Christians. One such verse that condemns non-Muslims states:

‘And fight them until there is no more Fitnah (disbelief and worshipping of others along with Allah) and worship is for Allah’ (Quran 2:193)

Here, it is made quite explicit that Muslims are instructed to fight those that do not believe in Allah. However, in contextualising this verse, the surrounding verses allude to punishing only those non-Muslims who do not pay the Zakat³⁸ and do not perform Muslim prayers five times a day (Hilali., Khan, 1996:52-53). In considering this, it can still be assumed that the above verse recognises non-Muslims as enemies (and to be an enemy is to be an adversary or foe). According to other verses in the Quran, to be an enemy of Islam is to not believe in Allah, the Prophet, and the last day. Evidence of this claim can be found in chapter nine of the Quran which, as alluded to in earlier discussions, instructs Muslims to:

‘Fight against those who do not consider the true religion as their way of life...and those who do not acknowledge the religion of truth among the people of the scripture...’
(Quran 9:29-32).

It is not definitively clear as to who the ‘people of the scripture’ are in this passage; however, a worthy assumption can be made that it is in reference to Christians and Jews (perhaps such reference is because Christians and Jews

³⁸ A certain fixed proportion of the wealth and of every kind of the property liable to Zakat of a Muslim to be paid yearly for the benefit of the poor in the Muslim community. The payment of Zakat is obligatory as it is one of the five pillars of Islam. Zakat is the major economic means for establishing social justice and leading the Muslim community to prosperity and security (Hilali., Khan, 1996:52)

adhere to the holy book, the Bible). In a similar light to verse 2:193, the context of this verse is based on only not attacking the ‘people of the scripture’ that pay the Jizyah.³⁹ Thus, in assessing only two verses from the Quran, it becomes apparent that there is some indication that Islam does inhabit an element of some vague instruction to be intolerant towards Christians and Jews. This does not however, suggest that there are no verses within the Quran that instruct Muslims to respect other religions. In fact, there are other verses in the Quran which contradict the above verses by encouraging religious friendship. One such verse is as follows:

‘God does not enjoin you from befriending those who do not fight you because of religion, and do not evict you from your homes. You may befriend them and be equitable towards them. God loves the equitable’ (Quran, 60:8).

The second reason to contribute to Islam’s intolerant image is as a result of Islamic extremists using religious concepts such as holy war, Jihad, martyrdom and kafar to justify Islamic terrorism. From this list of Islamic concepts, kafar is the most confronting concept for a non-Muslim. Throughout history, Muslims have referred to Christians as infidels or kafar. In fact, in most of the passages in the Quran that refer to Christians and Jews, they are identified as kafar. In Arabic, the word kafar refers to someone that is sinful, blasphemous and with false belief. Therefore, when extremist British preacher Hamza advised Muslims that “...Killing the kafar (infidel) for any reason is ok” and that “...killing the kafar for no reason is ok...” (Gardham, 2006:1), one can

³⁹ A tax levied from the people of the scripture (Jews and Christians), who are under the protection of a Muslim government (Hilali., Khan, 1996:274)

only assume, according to this perspective, that the kafar are the enemy of Islam; and the enemies of Islam are evil, and evil must be destroyed. The demonization of the kafar allows those Muslim extremists who regard themselves as soldiers for God to kill with no moral impunity, for they feel that their acts will give them spiritual rewards (Juergensmeyer, 2004:7).

The final reason to contribute to Islam being perceived as an intolerant religion is, according to participant opinion, the Crusades. It is evident, based on the intensity of participants continually referring to the Crusades throughout most themes during interviewing, that participants are trapped in their history. Historically, one of the many pivotal events to have instilled division among Muslims and Christians was the Crusades. Interestingly, although no direct question was presented to the participants, all participants referred to the Crusades as a pivotal event in history to have caused hostility among Muslims and Christians. Respondent C acknowledged that:

“...there are hostilities between Christians and Muslims dating back from the Crusades. Such hatred and hostility continues to breed itself to modern day...”

The fact that almost all respondents admitted that the injustices of the Crusades gave reason for the birth of hostility between Islam and Christianity⁴⁰, invalidates any claim that Muslims maintain no ill-will towards Christians. In fact, respondent's A and B, although reject the idea that Islam detests other religions, hinted subtle resentment towards Christianity, and used Christian teachings to advise Christians not to seek revenge on Muslims because:

⁴⁰ Refer to section 5.4.2 for an analysis of the Crusades

“...In Christianity, they say that if someone slaps you on your face, turn the other cheek. Why don't they do that if that's what they believe?”

Such a statement assumes that if Muslims are anti-Christian, it is then within Christian obligation to excuse such discriminate hatred, and not retaliate with further violence or animosity against Muslims.

Despite the many indicators that work towards assuming Islam as an intolerant religion, there are academics like Del Carmen (2003), who insist that Islam is severely misrepresented in this light. Del Carmen explains that it is ‘Australians’ fears and misunderstandings of Islam that make it appear as though the Muslim nation is gathering in a war against the West’ (Del Carmen, 2003:102). Participants expressed similar views and maintained that Islam is not anti-Western or anti-Christian for reasons that Islam has religious ties with most religions. Respondent D enforced this point with disappointment and explained:

“Australians don't know anything about the relationship between Islam and other religions such as Christianity. Islam is a development of Christianity and Judaism...Many people are quite amazed to learn that the ten commandments of the Old Testament are the crux of the Islamic religion”.

Even though participants acknowledged in earlier discussions that hostilities do in fact exist between Muslims and Christians, almost all the respondents

proceeded to contradict these claims by insisting that Islam is an extension of the earlier religions – Christianity and Judaism. Respondent F in particular, revealed that “...Islam does not hate other religions...”, whilst other participants such as respondent J, insisted that Christianity and Islam are not dissimilar:

“...it is a misconception that Islam is a totally different religion to Judaism and Christianity, and that the Muslims worship a different God...we respect Jesus and we know he was sent by the same God as ours. No, we don’t worship Jesus, we worship what the Christians call the Father...”

Respondent J raised an interesting point here that alludes to Islam’s complete tolerance of Christians and Jews. The collective opinions of other respondents affirm respondent J attaching Christianity and Judaism to Islam in such a way that a significant relationship exists between them – like a relationship between siblings. The fact that respondents explain that Muslims, Christians and Jews all worship the same God, raises one very important question: although Muslims, Christians and Jews believe in the oneness of God and are thus monotheist religions, how does Islam share the same God as the Christians, if the Christians believe in the Trinity (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) and Islam rejects it? Chapter 4, verse 171 in the Quran makes reference to Islam’s rejection of the Trinity:

‘O people of the book, do not exceed the limits in your religion...Jesus was no more than a messenger of Allah...Say not: ‘three (trinity)!’ Cease! Allah is the one Ilah (God)...’ (Quran, 4:171)

In accordance with the above verse, Islamic law only accepts the oneness of God and thus rejects the belief that God is made up of the Trinity. Furthermore, the Quran advises the ‘people of the book’ that referring to God as three entities, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is exceeding the limits, and is a sinful and misguided belief. In assessing this, if Muslims discard any claim that God is more than one entity, how then can both religions share the same God if God is perceived differently? Perhaps Christians and Muslims do believe in the same God, this research does entirely discredit this, but rather questions whether this is a factual claim. The question of whether Muslims believe in the same God as the Christians, requires prolonged analysis of the philosophies of religion, which is beyond the scope of this research. However, in briefly assessing the minimalist discussion in this section, there are two emergent possibilities. They are:

- (a) There is no division between Islam and Christianity over a monotheistic God, because Muslims believe in the same God as the Christians.
- (b) There is division between Christians and Muslims because Christians believe that the oneness of God is made up of the trinity, whilst Muslim reject this entirely, and only acknowledge the oneness of God.

In examining whether Islam is in fact anti-Christian, it becomes increasingly clear how complex and contradictory the arguments are. For instance, there are Muslims who contend that Islam does not detest Christians and Jews, whilst other Muslims confirm such detestation. Furthermore, the Quran bears its own contradictions – some verses instruct acceptance of those that are non-Muslim, whilst others are explicit in the instruction for Muslims to be intolerant of Christians and Jews. Finally, the participants themselves contradicted

themselves as to whether there is in fact any hostility between the three religions. Thus, in considering the complex and contradictory nature of these arguments, only tentative conclusions can be drawn as to whether Islam is in fact anti-Christian and anti-Jewish.

4.2 WHY ISLAM, MORE THAN ANY OTHER RELIGION, IS MOST ASSOCIATED WITH TERRORISM

Academics, politicians, self-anointed experts and lay persons, have come to conclude in the 21st Century that there is a telling connection between terrorism and religion. The emergent issue here is not whether there is in fact an actual connection, but rather that some religions possess a stronger connection to violence than others. Specifically, Western nations have presumed Islam, more than any other religion, possesses the strongest link or motivation to terrorist activity at this point in history.

When participants of this study were questioned as to why they believed Islam, more than any other religion, is associated with terrorism, almost all participants agreed and concluded that there are two significant causes for why Islam is so strongly linked to acts of terrorism. The first is that participants felt that the West has preconceived discriminations against Islam. As such, these discriminations have been well reflected within the Western media's negative depiction of Islam to their viewers. The second assumption held by participants, is the West's agenda to destroy Islam's reputation. Together, these causes are the sole reasons according to participant opinions, why Islam, more than any other religion, is most associated with terrorism.

4.2.1 *The Media: Its Discriminations and Manipulations*

According to the opinions of the participants of this study and the several academic contributions revealed in this research, the Western media is one of the main instruments in mobilizing negative Western public opinion of Islam. During interviewing, participants vehemently blamed the media for causing Islam's association with terrorism. Respondent I proved to be the most offended by Western media and protested:

“The media has created many problems - for example, the media coverage of the perpetrator of the Hoddle street massacre was not referred to as an Australian or a Christian, but why is it that when a Muslim does something against what is right, he is immediately identified by the media as a Muslim perpetrator. This leaves Muslims having to defend themselves on numerous occasions... Muslims are the Ned Kelly of modern day - when there was theft, Ned Kelly was immediately blamed and today when there is violence, the Muslims are blamed. In Australia and the West, Muslims have to apologize for everything. They are constantly accused of committing crimes that they have no knowledge of - this is against the Australian law where individuals are innocent until proven otherwise. Muslims are looked upon as guilty until proven innocent. There is severe discrimination against individuals who have Middle Eastern appearance, or the Muslim appearance. One need only look to the recent event at Cronulla, in Sydney where Muslims were yet again targeted. Muslim women who wear

the hijab are also attacked. The discrimination against Muslims is the reason why Islam has been blamed for instigating terrorism - the West's hatred of the East"

Furthermore, respondent D similarly commented:

"...there is the media hungrily waiting to release such animosity and ultimately gain ratings or money. There is always money to make if there is an enemy that is of great threat roaming in the world. And as a result of such monetary hunger, there's not always an equal incentive to clarify things, to balance things out, to really try and dig deep below the surface and below the stereotypes to find out the truth"

Hafez (2000) agrees with both respondents and also protests that '...the Western media regularly characterizes Muslims as backward and violent fanatics...' (p28). One need only conduct limited research to discover the overwhelming dedication of the media in its coverage of some Muslims revealing their support of terrorism and/or hate messages aimed at the West. For instance, The Australian newspaper featured an article that condemned extremist Muslim clerics in Sydney and Melbourne praising Islamic terrorists, and enticing Muslim parents to encourage their children to become martyrs (Kerbaj, 2005:1). Moreover, The Age newspaper also published a fear instilling article that revealed Melbourne Muslim extremists professing their support of the 2002 Bali terrorist attack. Supporters of those Muslims that were responsible for the Bali bombings reveal that the cause for the attack was because '...Jakarta is non-Muslim, and is a symbol of the white West'

(Thompson, 2005: 12). These are but only two reports among many others, which typify some segments of the Muslim community declaring Islam's exoneration of terrorism. Other Western media reports observe:

- (Extremist) Muslims declaring hate messages towards Westerners;
- (Extremist) Muslims declaring their support of 9/11 and other terrorist attacks;
- (Extremist) Muslims' violent interpretations of Jihad;
- (Extremist) Muslims calling on other Muslims to join in a united struggle against the West (Holy War)
- (Extremist) Muslims inviting Muslims to become martyrs.

The many voices within the Western media, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11, documented some (not all) reports that address the above themes, and as a result, the alleged association between Islam and terrorism strengthened with each report. As such, these reports provoked a global debate that involves both the religious and the academic. The debate attracts two sides. One side contends that there are widely held suspicions that Islam can motivate a Muslim to become a terrorist. The other side of the debate however, recommends that it is due to a handful of extremist Muslim statements and actions, which have influenced the larger audience in the West into believing that Islam is a violent religion that advocates terrorism. Usually those that contend with the later argument, blame the media as one significant reason why Islam has become branded as a terrorist breeding religion⁴¹.

⁴¹ Despite reports in the Western media negatively portraying Islam as a violent religion, it is important to note however, that the Western media does not necessarily accuse Islam of being a

Upon questioning the participants of this study as to why they believed Islam has become so strongly associated with terrorism, they collectively protested that the Western media played a pivotal role in determining negative Western public opinion of Islam. Specifically, participants contended that the reports surrounding 9/11 and the attacks that followed in Bali and Madrid, cast a negative light on Islam and its community. Furthermore, participants contended that the Western media purposely sets out to sabotage Islam, because they project Islam in such a way so as to imply that all Muslims are terrorists. For instance, respondent H raised the concern that:

“Unfortunately due to recent world events and the media coverage of these events, people have judged 1 billion Muslims by the actions of a few. The only terrorist group to be described by their religion is Muslim terrorists. Other terrorist groups such as Ku Klux Klan, IRA, Basque separatists are not described by the religion of their followers. Tamil Tigers sound like a basketball or football team. Because “Muslim terrorists” are described as such, the two words have become synonymous with each other”

The majority of the participants agreed with this point as evidence to support the claim that Western media has an agenda to sabotage Islam’s image. Respondent J elaborated on this point further, and advised Westerners:

terrorist breeding religion, but rather, observes the violent actions and statements of some segments of the Muslim community, relevant to terrorism issues.

“... don’t just let people colour your perspectives and perceptions of other people, but experience things yourselves...nowadays there’s a trend that’s worrying – people are being told by politicians, by the media, who to be scared of, who to hate, who to fear, who’s a threat, who’s somebody you’ve got to keep an eye on and so on. Suspicion's being cast and that destroys the ability to have friendships, and to develop relationships. So, my advice is always to go and meet the people face to face, ask the questions you need to ask to verify, ask for their evidence, and ask for the sources”

Here, respondent J alludes to the idea that the media preys more on the opinions and actions of extremist Muslims rather than the moderate Muslims, and uses their statements and actions to intentionally characterize all Muslims as violent fanatics. This is in the end has, according to respondent B, encouraged Westerners to be “...scared...” of Muslims and believe that Muslims are a “...threat...” to Western national security. Further to this point, respondent B explains:

“One significant reason of why Islam is accused of breeding terrorism is because of Western media influence. The media don’t understand what constitutes Islam. Western media and the West as a whole are far too interested in looking inward to their own hatred and condemnations of Muslims. The West are accusatory in nature and do not seek to unveil the true underpinnings of Islam and what Jihad means. The West follows the

definitions of Jihad declared by a small group of terrorists, and turns it on Islam and its followers. It makes a juicy story”

In assessing this statement, it can be ascertained that it would be unwise to suggest that the media plays little or no part in determining, or perhaps even convincing its audience into believing, that Islam has some causal factor in instigating the emergence of Islamic terrorists. However, it is important to also acknowledge that when journalists collate and report on any given event or conversation that, even if it is not the intention of the journalist, there will always be some form of contentious documentation in reporting that conversation or event. This is mainly due to extraneous reasons surrounding a story such as a journalist’s personal and political influences, and other influences that surround that event or conversation. Thus, when audiences read such material, they are subjected to influence by the explicit or implicit opinions of the author.

When the media inform their viewers of some Muslims shouting hate messages and declaring their support of terrorism, one need only look to the quotes within these reports and not the influences of the author, to realize that a journalist’s opinion has less ascendancy than the hate messages that are recorded in these reports. For example, when the Age newspaper informed Melbourne readers of a Muslim leader preaching “...if we want to die for Jihad, we have to have maximum damage” (Williams, 2005:1) one can only interpret such sentiments as extremely violent and hateful, even if the author tries to tone down the connotations of such a statement. Moreover, it confirms the suspicion of some Australians that Islam (more specifically Jihad) can indeed be motive for some Muslims to employ terrorism. Here, although some

would dispute, the media merely report on events and statements which they observe, and do not necessarily always set out to purposely influence Western audiences to discriminate against Muslims and label them as terrorists.

Some academics contend that it is not just negative Western media coverage of Islam that influences Westerners into believing that Islam breeds terrorists, but rather it is due to the pejorative nature of terrorism. Although the media contributes to influencing negative Western opinions of Islam and its association with terrorism, it should not, according to Wilson (1979) and others, be accused as the sole cause of negative projection of Islam. Instead, a negative image of Islam can also emerge from Tugwell's theory of 'guilt transfer'. The theory of 'guilt transfer' states that, after the event of a terrorist attack, a debate emerges between the originator of the violent attack and the adversary, as to who is the terrorist – the originator or the adversary (Alexandra & Rapoport, 1982:56; Poland, 1986:26). The objective here is for each group in a conflict to publicly argue, persuade and reveal the inequalities and flaws of their opposition, in order to gain support from their audience and avoid condemnation. It is worth noting here that it is the quality of persuasion by each side in a debate that has the greatest impact in shaping the perceptions of an audience. Respondent F acknowledges such influence and advises that:

“...I'm worried – politicians and the media dictate to Australians who they should be scared of they should hate...Australians need to look past this and not be so naïve...they need to make up their own mind for God's sake...”

Thus, some of the arguments that have been proposed by Western governments and private groups and individuals that suggest that Islam is violent, have won over the opinions of some Western audiences. Although the media makes some contribution to these arguments (with explicit and implicit bias), they do not, according to this perspective, make significant contributions. Rather, the media collate and report on the findings of the debate, and it is these arguments that have more weight in shaping Western opinions of Islam than the media.

In furtherance to the theory of 'guilt transfer', Hoffman (1998) further adds that audiences are also influenced to adopt negative perceptions of another group due to their obligation to their own group. Therefore, in the event of a terrorist attack, the perpetrator and the victim each generally have the loyalty of the community to which they belong and the support of those that sympathise with them. In explaining this point more specifically, Hoffman recommends that a perpetrator of terrorism is usually identified by audiences as either (a) a terrorist if the audience identifies with the victim of violence, or (b) a warrior, freedom fighter or martyr if the audience identifies with the perpetrator of a violent act. (Hoffman, 1998:32). Thus, according to Hoffman's analysis, some sections of the Muslim community sympathize with the 9/11 terrorists as a result of some of the atrocities committed against them by the West (Israel invasion into Lebanon; the situation of Palestine) and as such, refer to them as warriors and martyrs. It is here that the media employ their position as journalists and ensure coverage of such opinions. One can imagine the commentary surrounding such situations and how it would influence the adversary's community in adopting negative perceptions. Therefore, it is worth noting here that the media, although they merely report the commentaries surrounding such situations, are usually accused of gearing opinion such as the negative Western opinions of Islam.

Many like Chomsky shed a contrasting opinion to this argument, and suggest that ‘...the media is a powerful propaganda system that is able to mobilize an elite consensus and frame public debate...’ (Chomsky, 2000:153-157). Similarly, the participants of this study collectively agreed with Chomsky, particularly respondent E who explained that the “...Western media is only interested in blaming Islam for terrorism...” Others like Pipes (2002) however comment that:

‘...self deception and wishful thinking will not save us. The bromides of American intellectuals wishing to sanitize Jihad’s grotesque, barbarous reality will not save the life of a single potential victim...’ (p2).

In other words, Pipes claims that it is the laws and practices of Islam, particularly the concept of Jihad, that are the sole reasons as to why Islam has become associated with terrorism; and to deny such a link is to jeopardize the lives of Western civilians.

In examining the effect of the media in influencing negative opinions of Islam, two significant points emerge. The first point looks to the media as an informative body that focuses on the negativity of an issue or story so as to dramatise its content. In assessing this perspective, it is also worth noting that the media is not the sole reason as to why Islam has a violent image, but rather, it has more to do with the anti-Western revelations professed by Islamic extremists. The second point alludes to the theory of ‘guilt transfer’ whereby two groups in a conflict initiate a public debate to win sympathy whilst condemning their adversary. Thus, when various political and non-political

groups in the West and East engage in a public debate about Islam and terrorism, it can be accurately ascertained that it is not only the media that frames public opinion of Islam, but more the (political) group that projects the most attractive argument for sympathy votes.

4.2.2 *Western Hostility towards Islam*

Interestingly, according to a significant number of participants, another reason why Islam, more than any other religion, is most associated with terrorism is due to reserved Westerner hostilities towards Islam. Although Western hostility was nominated as a cause of Islam being viewed as an intolerant religion in section 4.3.3, participants re-nominated this also as a reason why Islam is most associated with terrorism. Participants widely contended that the West dislikes and discriminates against Muslims. Respondent I confirmed this argument and explained with disappointment that “...The discrimination against Muslims is the reason why Islam has been blamed for instigating terrorism – the West’s hatred of the East.” Furthermore, one of the pivotal historical events to have marked such resentment towards Islam is well explained by respondent D;

“...the Crusades have left a very bitter taste in the mouths of most Europeans about Islam and Muslims. This and other religious wars that followed contributed to the hate that is embedded in the minds of Europeans and Westerners about Islam”.

It was strongly evident during interviewing that all participants considered their history, specifically the Crusades⁴², as a reason as to why Islam is so strongly associated with terrorism in the West. Participants heavily blamed the Crusades for being the pivotal event to have planted the seed of hatred and competition between Christians and Muslims. The most interesting of the accounts as to why Islam has become so heavily blamed for terrorism however, is according to participant C, who advised that:

“...there are hostilities between Christians and Muslims, dating back from the Crusades. Such hatred and hostility continues to breed itself among different religious sides to modern day. Combined with such history, scriptures attract misinterpretation in such ways that it may demonize other people or religions that ultimately becomes the enemy. Interestingly, to have an enemy in modern times makes money for some people, and so that’s an incentive for some people to continue the war between religions”

Respondent F further confirmed this and explained:

“The obvious reason is the events of 9/11, however history also makes a contribution. Hatred between Islam and Christianity emerged during the Crusades, where the main aim of Christians was to plunder the Muslim lands. Today, both Catholics and Muslims assert that the Crusaders were

⁴² It is worth noting here that it was apparent during the conversations with participants, that the Crusades had left a very bitter taste in the mouths of Muslims about Christians.

just a bunch of criminals who plundered the Muslim land...”

Here, and among other responses alluded to earlier, the issue of racism and discrimination emerged as one of the most significant reasons as to why Islam has become so strongly associated with terrorism. In addition, anger was expressed by participants regarding why Islam is the only religion where terrorists are identified by their religion. Several respondents agreed with respondent H, who vehemently protested and questioned why other religious perpetrators of terrorism are never identified by their religion, unless they are Muslim. In examining this point, respondent B explained:

“...Islam was the first religion that challenged the authority and power of Christianity...it’s looked at negatively by the West because it is a direct threat to Christianity...the West is far too interested in looking inward to their own hatred and condemnations of Muslims. The West is accusatory by nature, and does not seek to reveal the truth, but rather, seeks to create juicy stories at the expense of Islam’s reputation.”

Moreover, respondent E stated that;

“The West has got its own agenda – its political agenda to deny Muslims the basic civil rights of self-determination...The West keeps interfering in the affairs of the East and discredits Islam because they don’t approve of

Muslim countries determining their own affairs. So I feel the West has a political agenda to discredit the East”.

According to Western academic literature however, such arguments are misinformed. Western media (mostly Australian, American and British) reports are not geared by discriminations or racism toward Islam, but rather, ideological interpretation. Ideological interpretation is one of the strongest arguments that reveals why Islam has become so closely associated with terrorism in the West. As White (2003) suggests in Chapter 2, ‘some Western nations may regard a specific act as terrorism, while those in the East may not’ (p9). This mostly depends on the manner in which terrorism is defined, and on the time and place in which one interprets its definition. This alludes to the pertinent cliché, ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’ which characterizes a perpetrator as both a terrorist and a freedom fighter.

Ultimately, variations in opinion of a terrorist attack or terrorist group differ according to the cultural and religious background that one comes from. One group that attracts both support (by those they fight for) and condemnation (by those they fight) is Hezbollah. The Australian government for instance, has listed Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation, whilst for many Muslims who live in and outside Lebanon, Hezbollah is a respected organization in place to protect Lebanon against Western occupation. This case study evidences that to identify a group, organisation or State as terroristic, is dependant upon an individual’s understanding of what is right and wrong according to the culture with which they belong.

In looking at the West’s alleged discrimination against Islam as a reason as to why Islam, more than any other religion, is most associated with terrorism, it

can be assumed that the conclusions to such claims remain tentative. The Crusades and other religious wars that involved Islam and other Western States are, according to participants, significant events to suggest that the West dislikes Islam and as a result, have an agenda to tarnish Islam as a religion for the terrorist. Western literature however disagrees with this idea, and recommends that the reason why some Westerners have come to understand Islam as a violent religion is not necessarily because of reserved hatred of Islam, but rather ideological interpretation⁴³.

4.3 JIHAD AND TERRORISM VERSUS JIHAD AND SELF-DEFENCE

Terrorism, as illustrated in previous chapters, is encompassed by a multitude of complexities when assessing the criteria of a terrorist act and, who is labelled as a terrorist. The pejorative nature of terrorism interrupts its potentially explicit definition, application and identification. This is usually due to the dual perspectives on terrorist events, and the lack of international consensus on what constitutes terrorism. Hoffman as discussed earlier in section 4.4.1, suggests that identifying the violent actions of an individual or group as terrorism:

‘...depends on one's point of view...if one identifies with the victim of the violence, then the act is terrorism. If however one identifies with the perpetrator, then the violent act is not terrorism’ (Hoffman, 1998:32).

⁴³ As 2.1.1 outlines, ideological interpretation is purely a matter of interpreting an event or issue to suit the political, social or economical group which an individual belongs to.

Here, blame is ‘...transferred from the originator of the act, towards the act of the adversary...’ (Alexandra & Rapoport, 1982:56). For example, America’s post 9/11 dedication to the ‘Global War on Terrorism’ (GWOT) in Afghanistan and Iraq, is argued by the Bush administration and other American allies such as Australia and Britain, as ‘America’s right to carry out attacks against those countries which pose a threat to America and its allies’ (The White House, 2001:1). However, according to Chomsky (2001):

‘Afghanis, Iraqis and their sympathizers regard the GWOT as an act of terrorism rather than a war...’ (Chomsky, 2001:43).

A significant example outside the Muslim domain is that of the IRA. Phil Rees, an award winning journalist, traveled within the precincts of the IRA and during his visit to Ireland in August 1979, he witnessed at first hand the dilemma of ideological interpretation. During his stay in County Sligo, Lord Louis Mountbatten (the Queen's cousin) and his two grandsons were killed by a bomb blast on his boat. ‘The attack was followed only hours later by the massacre of 18 soldiers, killed in two booby-trap bomb explosions near Warrenpoint close to the border with the Irish Republic’ (BBC News, 1979:1). The IRA released a statement following the attack, similar to that of other Muslim terrorist’s objectives, stating;

"This operation is one of the discriminate ways we can bring to the attention of the English people the continuing occupation of our country..." (BBC News, 1979:1).

Rees, on that evening in a local pub, watched men and women, sing, dance and drink to the success of the IRA who were hailed as ‘brave volunteers’. The British government however, was not so keen in identifying the perpetrators as freedom fighters, but rather terrorists who are “...evil and brutal, and should be, despised” (Chomsky, 2005:1). It becomes evident, that the actions of the IRA attracted two diverse audiences. There are those who hail the IRA perpetrators as heroes, whilst the British government labeled them as terrorists.

On one level, obvious actions are indicators of terrorism. It is the planting of a bomb in a public street, it’s the hijacking of planes, and it is hostage taking. These actions are all too commonly defined as acts of terrorism; employed by those segments of a community who feel oppressed and see no other means of resisting those that oppress them. However, the Mayor of New York City, Rudolf Giuliani, proclaims that such means of protest by terrorists “... lose any right to have their cause understood. We’re right, they’re wrong. It’s as simple as that” (Chomsky, 2005:3). For their sympathisers however, they are heroes and freedom fighters. In order to determine which of the two labels the perpetrator merits, it is wise to be informed of the causes of violence on both sides, in order to begin establishing a premise regarding who the terrorist is, and who the victim is in a conflict.

4.3.1 9/11 and the GWOT – Terrorism or War?

The event of 9/11 has sparked a heated debate between Muslims and the rest of the world. The debate involves those who perceive particular groups of Muslims that engage in specific forms of violence, as terrorists. There are others however, who espouse these very terrorists as ‘defenders’ and ‘freedom fighters’ of Muslim nations.

Despite the fact that the West has no single definition of terrorism, there is the common characteristic among definitions, that is well depicted within the UN Academic Consensus Definition of terrorism, which states that terrorism uses ‘...threat and violence based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperilled) victims, and main targets...’ (United Nations, 2006:1). Clearly, the event of 9/11 demonstrated both threat and violence based communication. Upon comparing Western literature and many Muslim opinions, there is agreement that 9/11 is in fact recognised by both groups as terrorism. However, there is a significant distinction in the manner in which 9/11 is referred to as terrorism. For Westerners, it is an evil and inhumane terrorist attack that took the lives of thousand of innocent victims. For some (not all) members of the Muslim community however, 9/11 is referred to as “...commendable terrorism because it is in response to the great aggressive acts by America” (NewTV, 2007:1). It is here in this argument that Western and Eastern opinions of 9/11 begin to diverge.

Despite several publicized statements by Bin Laden and others that reveal Islam’s alleged exoneration of Islamic terrorist attacks, the majority of the participants in this research not only rejected any Muslim involvement in 9/11, but also protested against the manner in which the ‘alleged’ 9/11 perpetrators have used Islam as an instrument to justify their cause. These Islamic extremists were labelled by most of those interviewed as “...terrorists...” and “...violators of Islamic law...” (respondent I). Specifically, respondent A explained:

“Al Qaeda, if there is such a thing anyway, does not represent Islam, they represent themselves. They have

some grievances against the Americans and they express these grievances by attacking civilians. Based on Islamic traditions and Islamic laws, it is absolutely wrong”

Respondent A raises two very significant points. First, Jihad does not condone the attacking of civilians, even if the civilians are within the jurisdiction of a Muslim enemy. Second, and more interestingly, respondent A proposes that Al Qaeda is a fictional group which was created for the purpose of tarnishing Islam. This argument is parallel to reasons outlined earlier in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2, where most participants explained that Islam’s violent image is mostly caused by the West’s agenda to destroy the reputation of Islam, by linking a Muslim group to 9/11.

Doubt surrounding the mere existence of Al Qaeda did not stop with respondent A. In fact, several other participants like respondent D also questioned the existence of Al Qaeda:

“The West is not honest in their explanation, in their statements about Islam and terrorism...September 11 and London and Jakarta-Bali are terrorist acts. Nobody can say it’s not a terrorist act to kill innocent people...But here, there is a question mark – who did it? Of course it is in the mind of the Western people and according to the way the media has brought it to the world that Al Qaeda (if there is such a thing anyway) and the Muslims did it.”

The most controversial opinion to have contested the existence of Al Qaeda and any Muslim involvement in 9/11 was that of respondent G:

“It is not right to accuse Islam as the force behind 9/11 just because they found a passport that was partially burnt with the name of Mohammed on it. There were four hundred Jews who cancelled their flights on the day of 9/11. Also there were a large number of Jewish people that worked in the twin towers, who took leave on that date...now is this coincidence? I don’t know – think about it, no body knows”

Several Australian and American government reports however, contest such opinions. The certainty of Al-Qaeda’s orchestration of 9/11 has not only been confirmed by Bush and other nations, but has also been affirmed by the very group that delivered the attacks (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2004:46; Warraq, 2002:70; Ziabi, 2006:5). Numerous media releases by Al Qaeda members and the sentencing of an Al Qaeda operative of 9/11, also confirm that 9/11 and other terrorist attacks such as the Madrid and Bali bombings, were delivered by the hands of Islamic extremists (United States Court of Appeal, 2003-2004:3-62).

Although several other participants continued to object to the existence of Al Qaeda, their objection became more progressively dominated with anger regarding the manner in which the “...alleged 9/11 Islamic perpetrators carelessly used Islam to exonerate their actions...” (respondent E). Respondent C was most annoyed by the manner in which Islamic extremists used Islam to justify 9/11 and stated;

“I’m offended – it’s blasphemous. It’s got nothing to do with Islam. It’s using Islamic terminology to describe

terrorism and link it back to God and Islam. It's very offensive..."

Further to this, respondent J explained:

"I'd hate Islam, if I thought that was Islam too. So I can understand people's fears and hatred of Islam, if that's what they think Islam is... This is a violation of our teachings and of Jihad. It is NOT compatible with Islamic teachings. These individuals are uneducated, evil, and deluded individuals trying to manipulate the teachings to create a following. I completely denounce them"

Whilst most participants rejected any Islamic vindication of 9/11, other participants hesitantly empathized with the 9/11 perpetrators. Some participants, particularly respondent F, even defended the perpetrators of 9/11 and insisted that;

"There is competition between Eastern and Western civilization. The wars of religion (Christian, Jews and Muslims) that stem back to the Ottoman Empire till today. The West always interferes and tries to take away the land that belongs to the Muslims and the basic right of independence from the Muslims. For example, Israel belongs to the Palestinians, but America and the Jews took it from them. So why can't they defend themselves? This is why Muslims attack. But then, people begin to say; 'Muslims are violent people' but we are not violent, we are

just defending ourselves...Our Prophet teaches us to not wish to confront an enemy, but to be patient and persevere. But if one meets their enemy, they must respond and lift their sword and defend themselves. Islam does not spread by the sword...this is how the West have displayed Islam”

Respondent H parallels this argument without making any specific reference to Al Qaeda, and commented:

“...the Al Aqsa mosque is subjugated at the moment. The land is subjugated, the people are subjugated, and there is oppression; that’s why there is uprising. The Muslims are harassed – Bush has declared a war on Islam...they are depriving the Arabs from having anything, to get any arms to defend themselves...So, why are Muslims bad if they rise up to have some sort of revolution, to fight for their own independence and find freedom?”

Similarly, in an article published in the Herald Sun, Abu Bakar Bashir protested that subduing Muslim nations “...were provocations for the 9/11 attack...” (The Herald Sun, 15/10/02). Some participants carefully affirmed this view and protested with conviction that the perpetrators of 9/11 were in a “...desperate situation to defend those Muslims suffering oppression in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Palestine and so forth...” (respondent F). Despite no direct question being posed in relation to Israel (formerly known as Palestine), all participants at some point during their interview, referred to the case of

Israel as the most significant reason why the East⁴⁴ is in opposition to the West⁴⁵. Participants were all passionate in their protest against the injustices against Muslims within that region. Participants claimed that it is this region, more than any other in the East, which angers and hurts all Muslims. Israel, according to all the participants of this study, belongs to the Muslims and not to the Jews. Respondent B explained with intensity:

“One must ask- why do these terrorists commit terrorism? Why (if Muslims did it) September 11? What is the cause for that? There is oppression. The oppression is nowadays - it has been taking place on us, in particular the case of Palestine. This angers all Muslims. What do you expect Muslim to do? Nothing about it? Accept it and shut up and be quiet and not mention anything about it and not fight it and not do anything about it? No! The West is assisting Israel and helping Israel to do a lot of things and to widen itself further and further. And maybe the aim of Israel in the beginning was to establish the great Israel, going from the border of Egypt to the Nile and from the Nile to the Euphrates. That means that the aim of Israel is to wipe out Muslims. So, you want Muslims to sit down and be quiet, and not say a word and not do anything? Israel has permissions from Western countries to do what it likes and has the support of all the Western governments in the world

⁴⁴ Refer to Appendix III

⁴⁵ In the context of this argument, the East is mainly referring to America and its allies.

– but Muslims are terrorists if they open their mind or tell anybody or do something wrong to somebody else”

For this reason, several participants were angered and questioned why Western nations are not perceived as terrorists, and why Muslims are immediately identified as terrorists if they retaliate in self-defence. The aim of the West, according to the participants, is to further itself in the Middle East, particularly Israel, by inflicting oppression on Muslims. All participants felt outraged by the manner in which Islam and its community have become perceived as terrorists. Some briefly recommended that Muslims are not provokers of violence, but rather that the West are the originators and provokers of modern terrorism, because they continue to cast oppression and terror upon the Muslims in Arab nations. Thus, in the minds of the 9/11 perpetrators and their sympathizers, such oppression by the West vindicates their actions. The imbedded hatred instilled in these terrorists against America and those States that ally with it, aroused Islamic extremists to engage in acts of terrorism such as 9/11. As a result of this, America and its allies responded promptly and initiated the ‘global war on terrorism’ (GWOT).

The GWOT, according to President Bush, is directed at relevant States that harbor and support the relevant terrorists involved in orchestrating and delivering 9/11 (US Department of State, 2006:1). America and its affiliate States, have described the GWOT as war because it is ‘...State sponsored violence that has a functional target and an enduring impact...’ and not terrorism because ‘...the immediate human victims of violence are not chosen randomly,’ but rather selectively (Department of the Parliamentary Library, 2001-2002:13). According to President Bush, the aim of the GWOT is to

“...hunt down the enemy and bring them to justice, take threats seriously and, bomb the hell out of them” (US Department of State, 2006:1).

Many like respondent F however, question the genuine intention of Bush’s GWOT, by associating the GWOT as State terrorism. Respondent F explains:

“...People believe that Islam allows for the killing of innocent people - this is not Islam. It’s only frustrated people who are doing that...The West needs to respect our rights ... Why does the West maintain the right to go and attack Afghanistan, attack Iraq and others but we have no right to do anything at all? How many innocent Muslim people have been killed in this (GWOT) and many other wars? The West is committing terrorism. So, shall we say the Christian society is based on terrorism? Shall we?”

Academics like Chomsky agree with the issues that respondent F raises, and reiterates that Bush’s GWOT is an act of terrorism. In fact, Chomsky goes so far as to accuse America as a terrorist State by explaining that ‘...nothing can justify crimes such as 9/11, but we can only think of the United States as an innocent victim only if we adopt the convenient path of ignoring the record of its actions and those of its allies...’ (Chomsky, 2001:43). A collective number of participants agree with Chomsky, and profess their disgust in the GWOT by admitted to believing that it is instead “...State sponsored terrorism...” (respondent A), and “...a war on Islam rather than a politicized GWOT” (respondent H).

Although the GWOT can certainly be viewed as terrorism by those who endure its impact, it is worth noting that such prescription of terrorism is not necessarily recognized as terrorism by the constitution of American and other allied States. (This proves to be another example of the pejorative nature of terrorism and evidences the obstacle of ideological interpretation). In looking to the UN Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism, for a State to be accused of terrorism, the direct targets of their violence must not be their intended victims, and their unintended victims of violence must be used as message generators (United Nations, 2006: 1). According to this description of what constitutes a terrorist act, the GWOT does not conform to this understanding. Therefore, although America and its affiliate States may have other more discreet motivations other than the obvious for engaging in a GWOT, it is not, according to Western laws and definitions of terrorism, regarded as a policy that inhabits any act of terrorism because their target is specific and legally functional. Their specific targets are terrorist groups, and their function is to debilitate such terrorist networks. Other opinions like the Canadian Arab Federation (2003) however, contend that there is a problem with legalistic prescriptions of State terrorism because:

‘...terrorist acts are left up to policy makers to determine who is and who is not committing acts of terrorism. Its subjective definition leaves too much room for political bias to affect the decision...’ (p9).

Despite arguments that refute any claim that identifies the GWOT as terrorism, the argument proposed by The Canadian Arab Federation should not be dismissed when assessing whether GWOT can in fact be associated with acts of terrorism. This is mainly due to the reason that those who draft definitions of

terrorism are government representatives, and governments ultimately seek to avoid being labelled as terrorist States.

Clearly, the event of 9/11 and the GWOT response are both indicative of ideological interpretation and thus attract two sides to the debate; those that identify with the victim (America) of 9/11, do not understand the GWOT as an act of terrorism but rather a legal measure to destroy the 9/11 terrorists and their sibling networks. In assessing the opposing perspective to this argument, those that sympathize with the 9/11 perpetrators (Islamic extremists), look upon their violent actions more in terms of self-defence rather than terrorism, and proceed to prescribe the GWOT as an act of State terrorism. White (2003) neatly summarises this point and explains that ‘whilst some powerful Western nations may regard a specific act as terrorism, other nations in the East may not consider it as terrorism, but an outlet of expression that originates from a deep sense of oppression by the powerful’ (p9).

4.3.2 *Hezbollah - Martyrs or Terrorists?*

Hezbollah is an extremist political-religious movement based in Lebanon that, according to the West, is guilty of engaging in terrorist activity. The most alarming feature of Hezbollah, like Hamas, is that even though it is recognised by the West as a terrorist organisation, it is a political party that has established seats in parliament. In 2006, PM Howard prescribed Hezbollah as a terrorist group, and confidently advised that “...there are no grounds for reconsideration” (ABC News, 2/8/2006). According to many Western nations, Hezbollah engages in terrorist activity in its most genuine forms because it targets innocent Israeli civilians to serve as message generators to their original

target, bombs Israeli infrastructure, advocates suicide bombing, and stresses the glory of dying for Allah (Barker, 2002:118).

Despite such reasons afforded by the UN Academic Consensus Definition in prescribing Hezbollah as a terrorist network, some participants preferred to refer to Hezbollah as a guerrilla group rather than a terrorist organization. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to address the issue of whether Hezbollah should be identified as a terrorist group or a guerrilla group, it is still worth alluding to two pivotal issues relative to this inquiry. The first looks into whether Hezbollah only attacks governments and their 'net safety', as this is a distinguishing feature of guerrilla warfare. If not, then Hezbollah does not bear the characteristics of a guerrilla group. The second point worth assessing is whether Hezbollah is indiscriminate in their violence, and whether or not it places limits on the selection of their targets. If not, then Hezbollah can confidently be referred to as a terrorist group.

In considering these issues, it is evident that Middle Eastern perspectives such as Lebanon, Syria and Iran, differ significantly to those of the West. For Middle Easterners, Hezbollah is not recognised as a terrorist organisation, but rather an admired group of soldiers that protect Lebanon from Israeli occupation. Respondent B affirms this point and professes:

“Hezbollah is considered in the eyes of the Arabs as a champion and in the eyes of America and Australia, as a terrorist”

Bahrain's Akhbar Al Khaleej also rejects any insinuation that Hezbollah is a terrorist group, and commented on the noble objectives and actions of

Hezbollah by revealing that they are a “...nationalist organization” (Middle East Times, 2006:1). Similarly, participants reacted very defensively to Hezbollah, and stressed that they are an organization that maintains a cause that is charitable, dignified and just. Every participant fervently testified against any accusation made against Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. In fact, all participants were deeply angered and offended that the West, particularly Australia, has associated Hezbollah with terrorism. The collective voice among the participants, jointly resounded with the opinion of respondent J who claimed that Hezbollah;

“...are a political group in a political struggle...why should they be identified as terrorists? How does that make sense?” ...they do what they feel is right to protect Lebanon from its enemies. All States do this, why should they be any different?” (respondent J).

In fact, respondents were so passionate in defending Hezbollah’s cause and reputation, their attention shifted towards shaming the Australian government of being completely dependent on the opinions of America. Respondent B moved from defending Hezbollah, to questioning the competence of the Australian government by explaining:

“...Australia has always been a follower...historically Australia followed England and fought many wars. One war was against the Turks in Greece, and they were killed in thousands and hundreds. Australia then followed America and again war - the war in Vietnam. What does Australia have to do with Vietnam? When I first came to

Australia, I was living in a hotel and then I was having breakfast with somebody, he was in the army. I asked – ‘why do you fight in Vietnam?’ He said, ‘we are after the communist anywhere in the world’. I said, ‘do you have a communist party here?’ He said, ‘yes’. I said, ‘why don’t you fight it here, in Australia? You go to fight them there, why do you allow it here in Australia?’... So you see, Australia is always following America; we don’t have a policy of our own. We are following them, blindfolded. So, why is it we go to Iraq? There’s no sense in that. Yes America is our ally, but you have to be convinced that what America is doing is right”

Respondent H maintained a similar stance and revealed:

“I feel that Hezbollah is a genuine organization in Lebanon. They resisted Israeli occupation in Lebanon. No other force could do that; even the Lebanese government couldn’t do it - Australia government considers them as terrorists because that’s the view of Americans. Whatever Americans say, Australians believe - if Americans say the sun rises in the West, Australians are going to say, yes, it does. I believe Hezbollah are good - I haven’t been to Lebanon, but I hear from people, because the people tell us”

Furthermore, respondent I agreed with such arguments and stated:

“I think Australia is denying itself the right to think freely – instead it follows the United States’ lead in that respect. This is admittedly a shame because I think here in Australia we have some good brains, perhaps better than the officials of the United States. I personally do not believe that Hezbollah is a terrorist group and I think Australia needs to re-examine its definition rather than mimic America”

The general consensus among participants projected disappointment and resentment, which in the end, resulted in participants collectively mocking the Australian government. Insults were hurled at the Australian government in such a way that the Australian government was accused of being naïve; failing to uphold leadership qualities such as independence, persistence, intelligence; and having no voice of presence among the international political realm. Participants maintained that Australia does not uphold any sense of independence, because if it did, Hezbollah and the Muslim community would not have been tarnished with terrorism as a result of 9/11. Instead, Australia followed the judgments provided by America, which in the end, contributed to the negative image of Islam. Respondent H most passionately demonstrated this view, and indicated their lack of faith in the Australian government by stating that:

“The American administration itself have lied and lied from Iraq to Afghanistan and to everywhere else... the sad part here is Australia stupidly follows and believes their lies. Australia needs to learn independence and not lick so much arse”

Although there was no direct question addressing the adequacy of the Australian government's handling on the subjects of Hezbollah, Islam and terrorism, participants willingly expressed their harboured disappointments by outlining their lack of faith in the Australian government. Based on the opinions of Hezbollah expressed by the participants of this study, it can be confidently concluded that to many Muslims, Hezbollah is not a terrorist group and to suggest that it is, deeply offends many Muslims. However, according to terrorism definitions in the West, Hezbollah have been identified as a terrorist group for the simple fact that they randomly attack innocent civilian populations to serve as message generators to their original target. Such diversity in proscribing Hezbollah as a terrorist organization or not, is mostly due to the pejorative nature of terrorism.

CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Terrorism and Islamic extremism are nothing new to the world, but since 9/11, they have loomed in the public imagination as a new phenomenon. The event of 9/11 marked a significant point in the 21st century for not only governments and their associate departments, but also for Muslim communities in both the Eastern and Western worlds. For those Muslim communities in the East and the West, Muslims felt harshly judged and sabotaged. In the West, 9/11 alerted Governments and their associate departments to the possibility of terrorism (particularly Islamic terrorism) on Western soil. Furthermore, the general perception of Islam in the West, post 9/11, moved from being perceived as nothing more than a religion among others, to that of the most feared of all religions. This fear of Islam emerged not only as a result of 9/11 and other attacks that followed, but also as a result of the religious motivations employed and revealed by Islamic terrorists that exonerate their acts of terror.

It is among Islamic justifications of terrorism that the concepts Jihad, martyrdom and Holy War awakened the West to the potential association between Islam and terrorism. Among this cluster of Islamic concepts that have been used by several Islamic extremists such as Bin Laden to exonerate Islamic terrorism, the most pressing concept to have associated Islam with terrorism is Jihad. There is a state of confusion as to what Jihad means, even among Muslims themselves, and whether or not Jihad, in actual fact, instigates terrorism. Prior to 9/11, Jihad was a term that was almost unheard of in

Australia. Since 9/11 however, Jihad has emerged as a household concept, but few really understand its meaning. Jihad is a highly problematical concept, which both Muslims and non-Muslims alike, do not agree on a singular working definition. As such, due to such ambiguity and inconsistency in defining Jihad, Westerners have relied heavily on the public explanations of Jihad by Islamic extremists. These explanations depict Jihad as a violent religious instruction that permits Muslims to fight against infidels via means of terrorism and war. As a result, based on these judgements by Islamic extremists, Westerners have come to fear Islam as a religion that recognises terrorism.

The media for the most part, contributed to the association of Islam and terrorism by dedicating a many reports on extremist Muslims declaring a Jihad against America and its allies. Not only did these reports guide Westerners to employ the interpretations of Jihad offered by these Islamic extremists, but also framed negative judgments of the Muslim community. Such negative depiction of Islam caused Muslim communities in the East and the West to feel discriminated against and unfairly judged by the West. Some Muslims have responded to such negative depictions of Islam by accusing the West of conspiring "...to dirty the clean name of Islam..." (respondent D).

Due to these and several other pressing issues that this research has not indulged in, it becomes imperative to investigate Jihad's association with terrorism. In order to fulfil this obligation, the following general research questions will be addressed in this chapter:

1. Why has Islam become the most feared religion in the West?

2. Why has the West associated Islam, more than any other religion, with terrorism?
3. Is Islam a violent religion?
4. Does Jihad have a relationship with terrorism?

There are three (of many) significant reasons why the study of Jihad and terrorism is so important in the 21st century. First, Australians and other Westerners have little (if any) understanding of the ideologies, beliefs and culture of Islam, yet have proceeded to link Islam with terrorism. Thus, it is imperative to the reputation of Muslims in the West, that this study not only facilitate the removal of any false negative stigmas attached to Islam, but also aid in broadening Western knowledge of Islam and its stance on terrorism.

The second pressing reason why the study of Jihad and terrorism is so important is because the Western view of Jihad is disfigured and blurry. Its definition, and whether or not it is a religiously covert term that denotes terrorism, are both areas that require at the very least, some tentative answers in order to establish any basis of Jihad being referred to synonymously with terrorism.

Finally, there is a great need to unfold relevant aspects of the Islamic extremists' mind, and how they exonerate their actions. By understanding the religious motives and ideologies of the Islamic terrorist, the West will be better able to understand the objectives of an Islamic terrorist, and perhaps be better able to predict (at least better than if no such understanding was present), who and where their enemies are, and where their next terrorist target will be.

It is important to note that the study of what motivates terrorism is in its infancy and conclusions drawn from it are at best, tentative (Lyon, 1990: 58). Although some of the findings of this research may be tentative and inconclusive, it is a stepping stone with which to help future research in understanding some fundamental underpinnings of Jihad and its relationship with terrorism.

5.1 REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5.1.1 Why Islam has become the Most Feared Religion in the West

The event of 9/11 and other terrorist events that followed, has caused the once ‘common religion among others’ in the Western world, to become the most misunderstood, and worse yet, the most feared. According to the opinions of the participants of this study, it is as a result of some widely held misconceptions of Islam, that Islam has become a feared religion. Naik advises that Islam is the most ill-conceived and misunderstood religion in the world. Such misconceptions he believes are about extremism, Jihad, and the notion of ‘spread by the sword’ in Islam (Naik, 2004). He believes that Islam has the maximum number of misconceptions compared to other world religions, and that the most destructive misconception about Islam today, is regarding terrorism and Jihad.

There are four significant reasons that emerged during this research as to why Islam has become feared by the West. The first is as a result of the manner in which Jihad has become defined as a purely violent concept. According to the participants of this study, such an association is due to both Islamic terrorists

publicly revealing that Jihad justifies their terrorism, and other Muslims publicly supporting the violent actions of these Islamic terrorists' as Jihad.

The second reason why the West has become fearful of Islam is because the Prophet himself is perceived to have been a violent man. There is no evidence to suggest that the Prophet was either peaceful or violent (even though there is a collective amount of scholarly work that argues both perspectives), therefore any conclusions regarding the life of the Prophet can only ever be inconclusive and at best, tentative. In considering this, it is worth continuing and acknowledging that there are numerous scholarly arguments that portray the Prophet as violent. The available literature on the Prophet, notably including the Hadith, indicate that the Prophet himself was a violent man who led over a hundred raiding expeditions, and that Islam itself survived by means of military victory (Akbar, 2002:16). Such depiction of the Prophet, ultimately contributes to Westerners perceiving Islam as a religion that was born out of violence; it is as a result of the military encounters of the Prophet, that subjectively violent concepts such as Jihad, martyrdom and Holy war emerged and remained prevalent in Islam.

Participants and other scholarly accounts however, contest any notion that the Prophet was a violent man. Instead, the Prophet is perceived by this group as a peaceful man who only ever engaged in violence in times of self-defence. It is worth considering however, that whether the Prophet engaged in violence as a result of self-defence or not, does not change the fact that the Prophet did himself engage in forms of violence.

The third reason why the West fears Islam is purely as a result of 9/11 and other terrorist attacks, where suicide bombing and martyrdom were presented

to the West as Islamic concepts that justify terrorism. Despite the collective opinion of the participants and passages in the Quran that explicitly state that suicide is forbidden in Islam⁴⁶, there are also passages in the Quran that explicitly encourage Muslims to die for Islam⁴⁷ and that those who die are acknowledged as martyrs. It is here within such religious text that variations in interpretation arise from both the moderate and the extremist Muslim. For the moderate, violence of any sort is deemed un-Islamic, unless in instances of self-defence. For the extremist however, violence of any sort is acceptable in self-defence. Essentially, although both views are one and the same, they are in fact different. The difference lies within the problematical concept of self-defence. There are two significant features of self-defence that set these arguments apart. The first is the manner in which self-defence is practiced (suicide or physical battles against an enemy), and the second is determining which situation warrants self-defence in Islam.

There are many ways in which self-defence can be exercised. It can be verbal protest, physical strike, or a personal spiritual battle against one's own evil inclinations. When self-defence becomes physically violent however, it is here that the moderate and the extremist differ. The extremist permits suicide in the cause of self-defence, and recognises suicide bombers as martyrs. The moderate however, does not permit suicide and prefers to resort to peaceful

⁴⁶ '...Whoever purposely throws himself from a mountain and kills himself, will be in Hell... and whoever drinks poison and kills himself with it, he will be carrying his poison in his hand and drinking it in Hell...and whoever kills himself with an iron weapon, will be carrying that weapon in his hand and stabbing his abdomen with it in the Hell...' (Quran, verse 7:670).

⁴⁷ 'Fighting is prescribed upon you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth and ye knoweth not' (Quran, verse 216)

means of self-defence. If in the instance where violence is the only alternative, even then suicide is not permitted by the moderate Muslim, but defensive violence is.⁴⁸

In any case, it is the assumption that Islam permits violence such as suicide by recognising such actions as martyrdom, which has instigated fear among the West of Islam. Even though the scope of analysis on suicide and martyrdom in this research is too brief (and does not even begin to even scrape the main arguments surrounding both concepts), it can be tentatively asserted that suicide in Islam is disallowed, and thus does not meet the requirements of martyrdom. The only time in which a Muslim can be remembered and rewarded as a martyr, is when he or she risks their life at the hands of an enemy in the pursuit of defending Islam and its community.

The fourth and final reason contributing to the West's fear of Islam is the idea that Islam is an intolerant religion, particularly towards Christians and Jews. Interestingly, there are not only several verses in the Quran that directly refer to Christians and Jews as infidels that must be fought against, but Muslim extremists publicly enforce such verses. For instance, according to Faraj (1986), Muslims have neglected the duty of Jihad, which is to establish a true Islamic State over the entire human population. This raises the idiom 'spread by the sword' which as it states, translates to forcibly convert the entire human

⁴⁸ When one looks to extremist figures like Bin Laden (Al-Qaeda) and Nasarallah (Hezbollah), and others in the Muslim communities who support their goals and violent methods of self-defence, it becomes eminently clear why Islam has become so misunderstood. Westerners are confused with two types of Muslims – the extremist Muslim (who believes in suicide bombing and violence) and the moderate Muslim (who perceive Bin Laden and Nasarallah as violent fanatics who use Islam as a cloak of respectability to justify their violence).

population of non-Muslims to Islam. For other Islamic extremists like Bin Laden, their objective is to establish a true and authentic Islamic State that is premised on Sharia law. Whatever the objective, one argument is prevalent here – Islam is, as are most other religions, a supremacist religion. Unlike other religions however, verses within the Quran explicitly instruct Muslims to not befriend the kafar, otherwise known as Christians and Jews.⁴⁹ The reasons behind such instructions are unclear; however, it is enough to invalidate several participants' claims that Muslims "...worship what the Christians call the Father..." (respondent J). Although many Muslims may not have ill will towards Christians and Jews, the fact remains that there is religious instruction in the Quran that directs Muslims to not befriend Christians and Jews.

In examining the idea of Muslims not befriending a Christian or a Jew, if this is the initial intention, then Muslims must perceive Christians and Jews as adversaries – and to perceive another group as an adversary, is to acknowledge that it is their differences that sets them apart. Thus, it becomes academically viable to question the claim that Muslims worship what the Christians call the Father.

It is important to acknowledge that both Christianity and Islam are monotheistic religions, and trace their origins back to Abraham and other Prophets like Moses. This evidences a shared history in the birth of each religion. In assessing these commonalities, two significant possibilities emerge from the limited analysis conducted in this research on whether Christians and Muslims believe in the same God:

⁴⁹ 'O you who believe, do not take certain Jews and Christians as allies; these are allies of one another. Those among you who ally themselves with these belong with them. Surely Allah does not guide the unjust people' (Qur'an 5:51),

1. Both Christians and Muslims believe in the same God before the acknowledgment of the Trinity by Christians, or;
2. Christians and Muslims do not necessarily believe in the same God because the Muslims God is premised upon oneness, and the Christian God is premised upon the Trinity.

Both arguments allude to the significant element that divides Islam from Christianity (apart from the obvious Prophets of either religion) - the Trinity. Muslims do not recognise God in terms of three divine entities (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit), but rather only as one. Therefore, if Muslims do not believe that God is made up of the Trinity, then the possibility that Muslims and Christians believe in the same God in the 21st century, remains questionable. This is mainly due to reasons none other than the fact that from the Muslim point of view, the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and of the divinity of Jesus Christ are distortions. This point is made explicit in several Quranic verses: "...surely whoever associates (others) with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust" (5:72) and; "...there is no God but One God" (5:73 – 75).

As a result of the lack of analysis of the philosophies of each religion in this research, it would be unwise to claim any expertise in answering or discrediting whether Muslims and Christians worship the same God. Therefore, it is only within the scope of this research to probe the factual nature of such claims.

5.1.2 Why the West Associates Islam, More than Any Other Religion, with Terrorism

Misconception or otherwise, the fact remains that ‘in no other religion, has the conflation of terrorism and Islam become so entrenched’ (Barker, 2002: 54). There are several reasons as to why the West has come to associate Islam, more than any other religion, most with terrorism. The most significant reason for Islam being most associated with acts of terrorism is as a result of the definition(s) and application(s) of Jihad. Jihad, although it has existed and been used to justify Islamic war and violence for centuries, has since 9/11, become perceived by the West as a violent and threatening concept. For the most part, the West has come to perceive Jihad as a concept that threatens national security because it is commonly defined in terms of violence, or more specifically Holy War. Such views have emerged as a result of various media releases depicting some individuals from Muslim communities supporting and encouraging the violent actions of Islamic terrorist attacks such as 9/11, by using the justifications of Jihad.

The second reason why participants claim that Islam, more than any other religion, is most associated with terrorism, is as a result of Westerners disliking and discriminating against Muslims, which is, according to participant opinion, the motive to destroy Islam by tarnishing its image as a terrorist breeding religion. The main reason, according to participants, as to why Westerners have such vengeance towards Muslims, dates back to the era of the Crusades when Islam challenged the authority and power of Christianity. For many, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, the initial perception rings true – the Crusades started a religious war between Islam and Christianity which still lends itself to some pockets within society today. However, the allegation that

the West has an agenda to destroy Islam, and that this agenda stems from the Crusades, is an outdated allegation as to why Islam has become most associated with terrorism.

It is not the claim of this research that racism does not occur, but rather that the Crusades no longer bears influence on Western thought against Islam. Many Westerners are not familiar with even the basic fundamentals of the Crusade era, let alone the religious-political complexities that existed in those times. Moreover, even if Westerners are familiar with the era of the Crusades - this would still have very little (if any) bearing in determining Westerners' negative perception of Islam, because most Western societies are no longer dominated or geared by dogmatic Christian laws and values which governed the era of the Crusades. This argument harbours no claim that no Westerner has personal discriminations against Islam and that no Muslim suffers from racism⁵⁰ - but rather that Islam's association with terrorism has little to do with absolute Western racism towards Muslims, and more to do with the observed violent actions and statements of some members of the Muslim community.

The final reason of why Islam, more than any other religion is most associated with terrorism, is as a result of the media's overwhelming reporting on Islamic terrorism. According to the participants of this study, the media is biased in their reports on events and issues relevant to Islam and terrorism. Participants maintained that the media demonstrates interest in only detailing the statements and opinions of Muslim extremists who support Islamic terrorism, and not the Muslim moderates who reject Islamic terrorism. Participants and

⁵⁰ Zionism is a significant reason as to why many Muslims believe that America and its allies maintain discrimination against Islam, and seek to damage its reputation by associating Islam most with terrorism.

scholars such Hafez (2000) both claim that the opinions of extremist Muslims are granted too much weight in the media, which in the end frames the debate of Islam's association with terrorism.

Despite the fact that the main aim of the media is to sell a story and make it alluring to read, their 'primary' aim is not to fabricate the fundamental facts that frame a issue or story, but rather report on the issues they observe. Of course, the media not only sensationalise their reports, but also all too eagerly report on the individuals within the Muslim community who insist on revealing their support of Bin Laden and Hezbollah. For the media, such headlines are informative, add substance to contemporary events or issues, and increase the popularity of the relevant media group. The media's purpose is to not only win viewers by reporting on pressing issues and events, but also on those issues or events that interest their audience. Thus, when viewers are presented with media coverage of a certain issue or event, the viewer is left to process the information given to them in a similar way to that of a jigsaw puzzle - pieces of information are slowly put together so that in the end, a picture or opinion is formed. Whether the pieces to the puzzle of Islam's association with terrorism are correctly put together or not by a viewer, solely depend on the personal, political and intellectual orientation of the viewer, and not entirely on the influence of the media.

It is acknowledged therefore that although the media does bear both positive and negative influence on Western views of Islam (there is no argument here to suggest otherwise), it is in the end, mostly dependent on an individual's interpretation and familiarity with the issue that the media covers. It would be

naïve to suggest that the media does not thrive on the opinions of extremists⁵¹ (indeed it does), but it would be more naïve to dismiss Islam entirely from supporting terrorism if there are in fact Muslims who support terrorism by employing concepts such as Jihad to vindicate acts of Islamic terrorism.

5.1.3 *Religiously-Inspired Terrorism and the Notion of Jihad*

Throughout history, every religion evidences acts of violence in some form or another. Whether the main tenets of those religions that have engaged in events of violence in fact prescribe such violence, is an area which this study has not thoroughly explored. Thus, a thorough analysis of Islam and its main tenets have not been investigated in enough detail to establish strong and stable conclusions. This study has however, focused on some of the most important tenets of Islam that specifically address the concept of violence. In referring to these and the actions of Muslim terrorists, tentative conclusions as to whether Islam is a violent religion, can at least be established.

Verses in any religious text pose complexities in defining and interpreting the authentic intentions of the messages which they are intended to depict. Religious texts or instructions, if intended to be peaceful, are usually explicit that violence does not have its place in that instruction. When religious text however, begins to employ concepts that are on face-value violent, but are used to generate peaceful instruction, usually result in ambiguity of the initial intention of that religious instruction. There are numerous verses within the

⁵¹ For instance, some reports revealed Muslims supporting the Bali terrorist attack, whilst other reports revealed a Muslim leader preaching to Muslim parents to teach their children to become martyrs and die for Jihad.

Quran that appear to refer to violence, but are not always necessarily violent in nature. For example, the concept of 'fight' has been extensively referred to throughout the Quran and, despite its obvious connotation, it is often transcribed to mean the battle between good and evil; this can be by way of spiritual or physical battle. The physical battle is obviously violent, but in the case of a spiritual battle, no such violence exists. Instead, it is a person spiritually striving to do good things. Such good deeds could translate to generously giving to the needy and the poor, or could be as simple as not being greedy or selfish.

Despite such peaceful connotations of 'fighting' in the Quran, there are also many verses that explicitly refer to the violent physical form of 'fighting'. For instance, 9:29-32⁵² of the Quran clearly instructs Muslims to fight against those that are not Muslim, (implying religious intolerance) and 2:190⁵³ instructs Muslims to fight in the way of Allah. In looking at these verses, it is evident that violence does have its place in the Quran. In fact, it is perhaps due to the regular reference to 'fighting' in the Quran, that the conscience of the Islamic terrorist is anesthetised. One such example where Islamic text has calmed the conscience of a terrorist is the case point of Bin Laden, who believes that Muslims are duty bound to kill Americans and their allies. This, he announced, is in "...accordance with the words of Almighty God" (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2004:46). One of the main concepts

⁵² 'Fight against those among the People of the Book who do not believe in God and the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His messenger have forbidden, and who do not consider the true religion as their way of life...' (Quran 9: 29-32).

⁵³ 'And fight in the way of Allah, those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly Allah likes not the transgressors...' (Quran, 2:190)

that work towards justifying this and other violent claims is the concept of Jihad.

Despite the fact that there are competing arguments surrounding Jihad's definition and application, almost all Muslims and non-Muslims' perspectives on Jihad, agree that it not only translates to peace, but it does have a military component that supports violence. The peaceful interpretation of Jihad, as outlined earlier, encourages Muslims to strive to perform good deeds with the aim in upholding justice, peace and obedience to Allah. However, Jihad can also act as a call for violence. In previous chapters, the conditions of both the violent and the peaceful connotations of Jihad have been thoroughly assessedd. This is not to suggest that the issue of Jihad's definition and application has been resolved in this research, but rather that it provides a credible foundation upon which a conclusion can be drawn as to whether Jihad is a violent concept and has a relationship with terrorism. Whilst most opinions concerned with the study of Jihad contend that one of Jihad's elements involves peaceful instruction, for the Muslim extremist however, no such recognition of peace is acknowledged; Jihad is transcribed by the extremist as mostly a violent concept.

Although there is no agreement among Muslims and non-Muslims as to whether Jihad is violent, peaceful, or both peaceful and violent, there is one constituent of Jihad which all perspectives agree to - Jihad has a military component which is only applicable for reasons to do with self-defence. It is here, among the reasons of self-defence, where complexity thrives. The debate surrounding which conditions of self-defence are exonerated by Jihad, is clearly divided. There are those that think that Jihad recognises self-defence if a Muslim is fighting against the kafar (unbelievers) and in furtherance of Islam

(spreading by the sword). This perspective recognises no limits on their victims. There are others however, that contend that Jihad only justifies violence if Islam and its community are attacked or threatened, and all other peaceful measures fail. According to this perspective, in order for Jihad to justify such violence, conflict must only take place on a battlefield and away from innocent people. Thus, according to this perspective, there are strict limitations placed on the victims of violence - no women, children and elderly are to be harmed.

In assessing these arguments, no solid conclusion can be drawn other than the fact that Jihad permits violence and that violence is only condoned by Jihad if it is out of self-defence. Self-defence can be actioned in two of many ways. The first is to (violently) protect one's community, whilst the other is to (violently) protect oneself.⁵⁴ In examining this point, there are many Islamic groups that readily come to mind that reflect such actions of self-defence. For instance, one of Al-Qaeda's objectives is to protect Islamic States from Western occupation and oppression. Furthermore, Hezbollah's aim is to protect Lebanon from Israeli invasion. According to certain verses within the Quran such as 4:95, (which advises those Muslims who do not fight in defence of Islam with their lives, are not equal to those who do), Al-Qaeda and Hezbollah objectives and actions can be sanctioned by Jihad. However, not all Muslim and non-Muslim opinions of Al-Qaeda and Hezbollah agree that Jihad condones their violent actions because of the manner in which they conduct

⁵⁴ Self-defence can be verbal or physical violence. Obviously in this instance, this study is more concerned with physical violence.

their violence and their indiscriminate targeting of victims. Thus, common obstacles that impede on establishing a unified definition of Jihad are;

- (a) The victims of violence, and;
- (b) The location of violence.

Both Hezbollah and Al Qaeda do not execute their violent acts against their enemy on a battlefield, and both have taken the innocent lives of women, children and the elderly during the course of executing Jihad. This, according to the Quran, is a violation of the conditions of violent Jihad.

Such disagreement of Hezbollah's and Al Qaeda's actions as Jihad is as a result of ideological interpretation and the pejorative nature of terrorism. For Al Qaeda and Hezbollah, their actions of violence are Jihad because they are defending the Muslim community. For others however, their actions are not Jihad because they have violated Islamic law in their conduct. Metaphorically, one can suggest that a snake is a terrorist if it instils fear into their victim, but does it necessarily make that snake a terrorist if it attacks to protect itself? In any case, in defining Jihad, it is a credible assumption to suggest that Jihad does have a relationship with terrorism for the simple fact that it is a concept that can encourage a Muslim (even if it is only the extremist Muslim) to engage in violence in times when a Muslim judges the necessity for violence. This does not insinuate however, that all Muslims are terrorists because, as Russell (1983) recommends:

‘...humans interpret things to suit their own agendas...cruel men believe in a cruel God...and kindly men believe in a kindly God...’ (p14).

Thus, the subjective nature of terrorism and Jihad, lend themselves to interpretation by the moderate and the extremist Muslims who in the end, demonstrate differing perspectives as to whether Jihad condones various degrees of violent actions.

5.2 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

For a range of reasons that have not yet been highlighted, it is imperative that every researcher acknowledges not only the strengths of investigations, but also the weaknesses in order to establish how reliable the findings are. In looking to the strengths of this research, it can be confidently stated that there are many.

Features of qualitative research indicated many positives in this research. First, interviewing allowed this research to delve into and extract the opinions, experiences and feelings of participants (Hagan, 2003:287) regarding Jihad, terrorism and other relevant themes. This provided rich, yet often contradicting data that no other research relevant to this topic has obtained. Furthermore, interviewing provided thick description that was later compared to academic literature, and interpreted. Second, the conclusions of this research were shaped according to the information that was produced about Jihad and terrorism, and not on preconceived ideas. This, (also referred to as grounded theory), allowed the researcher to remain open to unexpected findings, build theory as information unfolded and allow for data and theory to interact. The third and perhaps the most significant strength of this research, is due to the fact that the researcher is fluent in Arabic. This posed as perhaps the most positive feature of this research because:

- (a) It won the trust of participants in sharing their opinions, interpretations and experiences, and;
- (b) Attracted more detailed information than if interviews were administered by a researcher who did not speak Arabic.

This also contributed to another positive element in the research, which was the researcher did not have to rely on a translator to interpret the data produced during interviewing,⁵⁵ which could have in the end, affected the overall findings.

Despite the several strengths in this research, there are however also some significant weaknesses which may have affected the conclusions of this research. The first weakness revolves around the sample size of the participants. Unfortunately, members of the Muslim community were not keen to partake in this research for reasons outlined in chapter three. This affects the representativeness of the findings because only a very small sample of Muslim leaders were selected to offer their opinions, interpretations and experiences on particular themes. The second limitation of this research is due to possible preconceived bias that the interviewer may have developed whilst locating participants for interviewing. Some members of the Muslim community did not welcome the invitation to participate in this research, and at times responded aggressively. Such negative responses from some Muslim leaders

⁵⁵ 'It is quite evident that anyone who is forced to rely on translations...has to rely himself on a specialist literature which is often highly controversial, and the merits of which he is unable to judge accurately. Such a writer must make modest claims for the value of his work' (Williams, 1994:8).

could have instilled negative perceptions of Muslims, such as intolerance. This could have perhaps unknowingly affected the way in which the researcher interpreted the data produced by those who kindly and willingly participated in the interviews. The third and final weakness of this research is the limitation placed on the length of this research. This placed severe limitations because not all relevant concepts and themes were assessedd thoroughly enough in order to establish findings that were comprehensively researched. Thus, several research questions surrounding Jihad, terrorism, violence, suicide and Islam could only be tentatively concluded, rather than established.

5.2.1 Recommendations for Future Research

It is important to consider that with every research that no investigation captures all the necessary concepts, cases and events that would ensure a complete and thorough analysis of a topic. This, in the end, effects the conclusions of a research in such a way the conclusions may not be as credible as they would have otherwise been, if a more thorough investigation of all relevant themes were considered. In the instance of this research, there are several areas that were not investigated either in full, or at all, due to certain limits imposed on this research such as time and word length constraints. The following list alludes to the areas which this research failed to either consider or comprehensively investigate:

- Jihad's historical application
- The origins of Islamic extremism
- The relationship between religion and violence
- The relationship between religion and the terrorist

- A case study on Hezbollah and Al-Qaeda
- A case study on the media and its methods of reporting Islamic terrorism
- Suicide and the conditions of martyrdom
- Violent instruction in the Quran

These areas are gaps which this study did not indulge in, and thus, require future investigation in order to not only add to the findings of this research, but to also ensure a more elaborate analysis of Jihad, Islamic extremism, suicide, martyrdom, holy war and terrorism.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions were presented to each participant during the interviewing stage of this research.

Question 1: The word Islam itself denotes ‘submission to God’ and the adjective Muslim means ‘peaceful’. However, many Western countries have proceeded to associate the Islamic term Jihad, with violence and terrorism. Why do you think Islam has become the singled out religion which is so strongly associated with instigating terrorism?

Question 2: What in your opinion is the most ill conceived misconception about Islam today?

Question 3: In response to the actions of a few, Islam has been placed in the forefront of controversy since 9/11, and has been accused of being a religion that breeds violence. Negative media coverage has influenced Australians into believing that Islam has some association with terrorism. Is it an ill conceived and ignorant association? In your expert opinion, how would you educate Australians about Islam and whether or not there is in fact any association between Islam and terrorism? (Please explain in detail your response).

Question 4: What, in your expert opinion, does the concept Jihad mean to you, and how would you want Australians to understand what this concept means in Islam?

Question 5: Do you believe that Jihad supports, or perhaps, motivates acts of terrorism? Why or why not?

Question 6: In a report investigating terrorist threats to Australia, the Australian Government (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) lists two Fatwa's that were declared by Al-Qaeda. They are as follows;

In their 1998 Fatwa, Bin Laden, Zawahiri and their associates tell Muslims:

“to kill Americans and their allies civilians and military is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy Mosque in Mecca from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty God” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2004:46)

Al Qaeda spokesman, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, said in June 2002;

“We have the right to kill four million Americans, including one million children, displace double that figure and injure and cripple hundreds of thousands. We have the right to fight them by chemical and biological weapons” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

What are your responses to each of these alleged Fatwa's? (Please explain).

Question 7: Mohammed proclaimed that Islam is the Religion of truth and reigns supreme over all other religions. The Quran states that Muslims are superior to all other religions and states; *Ye are the best of peoples*. However, Irshad Manjii, a devout Muslim, criticizes her faith and declares that, Islam has a supremacy complex? (Callick, 2004). Do you believe that it is a primary goal of Islam to convert individuals of other faiths to Islam? At what cost is conversion justified?

Question 8: Islamic terrorists justify their violence by Jihad. Ameer Ali, president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils states that, Islamic terrorists do not deserve to be called Muslims. They have to be condemned. They are traitors of the community? (Naik, 2002). Do you believe that the actions of these fundamentalists deem them unworthy of being called a Muslim? Why or why not?

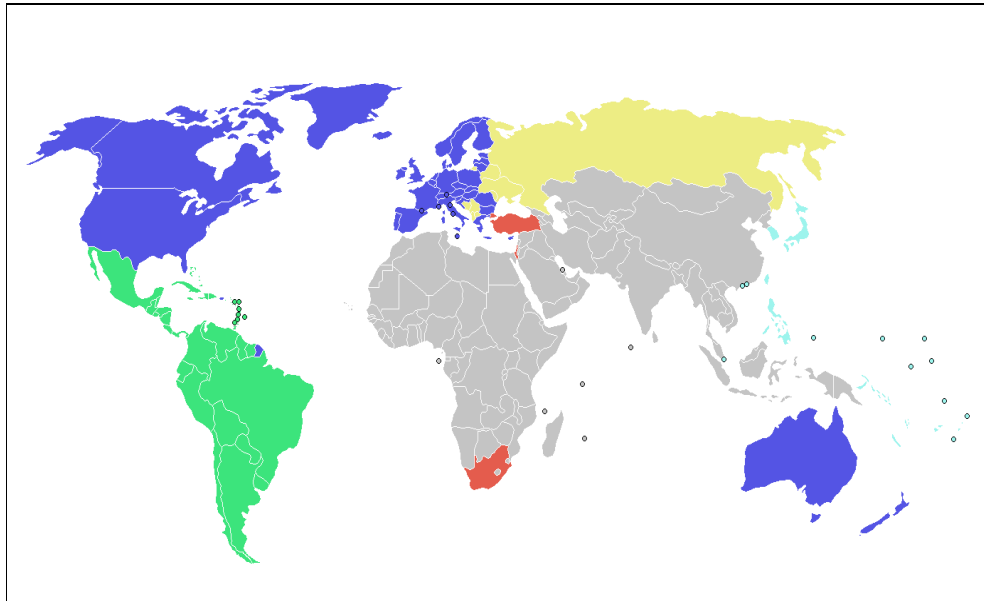
Question 9: Hezbollah is not only tolerated, but also a respected organization in Lebanon that has established seats in parliament. In Australia however, Hezbollah is a banned organization. To be banned in Australia, the Attorney General must believe that there are reasonable grounds that the organizations directly or indirectly engaged in preparing, planning, assisting or fostering the doing of a terrorist attack. What are your opinions of Hezbollah? (Please explain).

Question 10: Please respond to one of the following:

- (a) Why do you think the Australian embassy in Jakarta was bombed in 2004?
(Please explain your views)
- (b) Why do you think that the Sari nightclub was bombed in Bali in 2002?
(Please explain your views)

APPENDIX II: 'THE WEST'

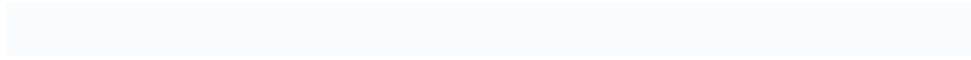
The accuracy of this map and its divisions of the West remains disputed among academics, however, for the purpose of this research, such division of the West is accepted.



(Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:West.png>)

LEGEND:

- Developed countries of North America, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand, (always considered Western) as well as newer and potential members of the EU such as Poland, Romania and Bulgaria- generally considered Western.
- Developed countries in east asia and Oceania, sometimes considered Western
- Latin America, settled by European countries (Portugal, Spain, and others) which have ties to European culture – generally considered Western.
- Eastern Europe, Balkans, Caucasus – generally considered Western
- Other states sometimes considered Western
- Not usually considered Western



APPENDIX III: 'THE EAST'

The Middle East (or West Asia) sits where Africa, Asia and Europe meet. The countries of the Middle East are all part of Asia, but for clarity reasons they are geographically shown here as a separate landmass (Worldatlas.com, n.d).



(Retrieved from <http://worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/as.htm>)

APPENDIX IV: 'ISLAM'

Beliefs and fundamentals

The verbal noun Islam, means 'entering into a condition of peace, submission and security with God, through allegiance to him and His Prophet Mohammed (Akbar, 2002:11). Muslims believe that Islam is the religion which God always intended for his creation, and was derived in its present form, the Prophetic ministry of Mohammed, and from the revelation mediated through him, the Quran (Bergen, 1998:8). The Quran is thought to confirm, but also supersede all other scriptures and is the scripture that is preserved in heaven (Peters, 1994: 198) and is said to be the verbatim word of God, revealed to Prophet Mohammed.

The Quran offers a code of conduct for Muslims in various areas of life, so that they may not transgress the boundaries of being a good Muslim. Every activity of a strict Muslim needs a religious sanction, and, in theory at least, everything a Muslim does, important or trivial, has the backing of religious law (Walker, 1998: 96). From the Quran and the early Hadiths, were basic codified elements relating to Muslim practice, faith and observance (Walker, 1998: 102). The totality of Muslim law is known as the Sharia, and this governs the life of a Muslim in all its aspects; moral, devotional, political, social and personal (Stewart, 1994: 256). The Sharia is codified law of what Muslims should believe and practice. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the Sharia in its entirety, however, the six basic principles of Islam, and the Five Pillars of Islam (which are the most significant) will be assessed.

Mohammed, Islam, and the birth of Jihad

Mohammed was born in and around 570-571 B.C to the Quraish tribe in Mecca (Akbar, 2002:9). It was there, among the Quraish tribe, that Islam was born and a new Prophet was found. Islam is founded on the belief that the illiterate Mohammed received a message for humanity from God by the angel Gabriel, who appeared to Mohammed and told him to read. So, the illiterate Mohammed began to read the word of God that the Angel Gabriel had delivered and he secretly preached to others. For three years Mohammed's message spread quietly and privately and a group of followers formed around him (Brown, 2004:73). After such time, God instructed Mohammed to go public with his message. Mohammed began to teach the word of God in an enchanting prose that was later compiled and called the Holy Quran (Akbar, 2002; 89). 'The Quran is the central, sacred reality of Islam' (Nasr, 1994:98) and is the verbatim Word of Allah revealed to the Prophet of Islam in the Arabic language which Allah chose for His revelation (Nasr, 1994:22).

The Quraish tribe was not so willing to accept Mohammed's teachings. Mohammed carried out God's orders to preach His word, in spite of the ill-treatment he received – this attracted much opposition within the Quraish tribe (Brown, 2004:75). In 622 A.D, Mohammed decided to flee from Mecca where he was being persecuted, and sought refuge in Medina among the Yathrib tribe (Gold, 2003:19). It was there, in Medina, that Mohammed was able to freely preach what God had revealed to him, and many of the Yathrib people, who promised him protection, accepted his revelations and converted to Islam (Akbar, 2002:22). The Yathrib tribe formed an army to protect the Prophet, and later travelled with him to Mecca, where he succeeded in forcefully converting his relatives and fellowmen to Islam.

The first significant event of Mohammed was the battle at Badr in 624 A.D and is a turning point in Islamic history (Peters, 1994: 210). The battle at the Badr wells is known as the background against which a major military operation unfolded (Peters, 1994: 213) and influenced many Islamic generations thereafter. When Mohammed returned to Mecca, he mocked the Gods of the Quraish people – it was from that point that the leaders of the Quraish began to plot Mohammed's destruction (Brown, 2004: 75). Unable to reach Mohammed directly, the Quraish people targeted the weak among Mohammed's followers – slaves were especially vulnerable (Brown, 2004: 75). This opened the door for rivalry between the two tribes and major military operation unfolded.

Mohammed set out to Badr, where he learned that a large Meccan caravan of several hundred richly laden camels was passing through (Walker, 1998: 119). The Meccans came to learn of Mohammed's plan to ambush the caravan, and assembled a force and proceeded to Badr to confront the ambushers (Stewart, 1994: 68). Mohammed and his army, some three hundred strong, waited for battle against the Meccans, an army of one thousand (Akbar, 2002: 1). Before battle ensued, Mohammed kept up a constant prayer. This being Mohammed's first real war, he doubted and cried out, 'Oh Allah, if this band of Muslims perishes today, thou wilt not be worshipped anymore' (Akbar, 2002:1).

Several sources witnessed angels fighting alongside the Muslims at Badr in fulfilment of a promise of God, 'If you are steadfast and fear God, and the foe come upon you, thy Lord will help you with five thousand angels' (Brown, 2004: 79). History records that the Prophet lost fifteen men and the Meccans fifty (Walker, 1998: 120). The battle ended in a victory for Mohammed and it was here that the spirit of Jihad entered Islam. Mohammed was said to have

contemplated the execution of all the Meccans that were captured at Badr, but his more moderate followers prevailed on him to hold them up for ransom because they opted to avoid further blood from being spilt (Walker, 1998: 320).

Mohammed walked away from the battle at Badr with power in his hands and set out onto a path of aggressive political violence. Mohammed followed up the advantage gained at Badr and entered into the new spirit of Jihad, by leading well over 100 raiding expeditions against Meccans (Walker, 1998: 121). In time, the early raids evolved into larger battles, which, eventually began to take on the character of a religious war (Jihad) against infidel or enemy populations (Walker, 1998: 321). It was here Jihad entered Islam, and one element of it was Holy War.

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LEGISLATION

Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cwlth), s100.1